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THE
HONOURABLE MISS FERRARD

BY THE
AUTHOR OF "HOGAN M.P."



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THE
HON. MISS FERRARD.

BY THE
AUTHOR OF "HOGAN, M.P."

"Only a learner,
Quick one or slow one;
Just a discernor,
I would teach no one.
I am earth's native:
No rearranging it!
I be creative,
Chopping and changing it?"
BROWNING.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

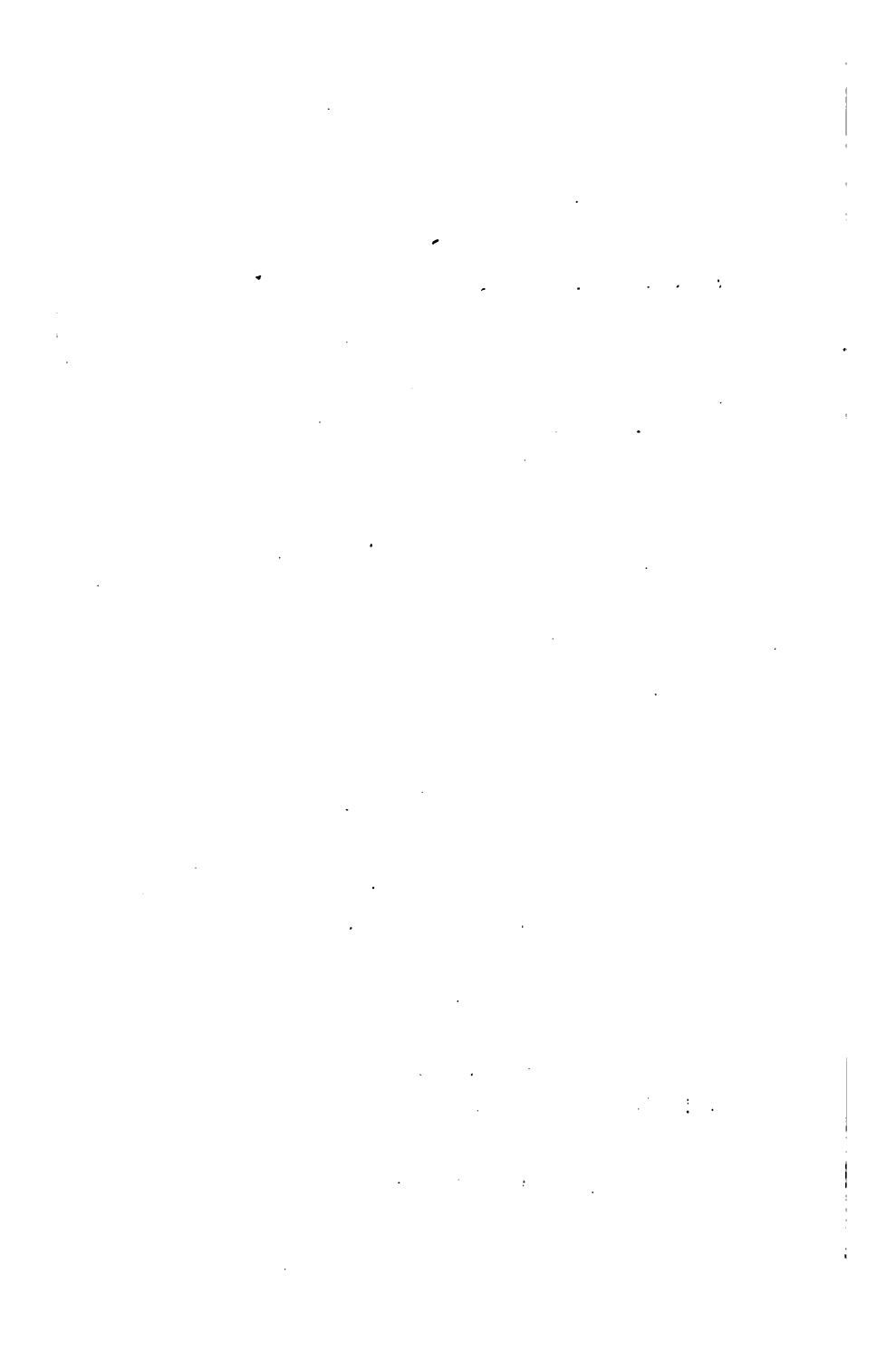
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THE HONOURABLE MISS FERRARD.

CHAPTER I.

“ J’approche d’une petite ville, et je suis déjà sur une hauteur d’où je la découvre . . . Je me récrie, et je dis : Quel plaisir de vivre sous un si beau ciel et dans ce séjour si délicieux ! Je descends dans la ville, où je n’ai pas couché deux nuits que je ressemble à ceux qui l’habitent ; j’en veux sortir.”

LA BRUYÈRE.



IX months had passed since Mr. Satterthwaite’s visit to Darraghmore. He had bought the estate of Rosslyne when it came to the hammer a few months after his departure from

2 *The Honourable Miss Ferrard.*

Ireland, but business of various kinds had delayed his arrival and final establishment in his new residence. He had for a considerable time meditated seriously taking up the profession of farming, as he had tired of travelling, and desired a steady occupation, and to the dismay of his friends had determined to make his first experiment in Ireland. He had been for a long time casting about for a suitable investment for the spare thousands he intended to devote to this purpose, and Rosslyne, whose beautiful situation won his heart as soon as he beheld it, thus became his property.

Thus it happened that a squally April day saw Mr. Satterthwaite on the hurricane deck of the Holyhead steamer *en route* for the South *via* Dublin. The day was cold at sea although the wind blew from a mild point, and the soft Irish rain

that came driving down at intervals from the Wicklow mountains felt almost warm. Every now and again the sun broke through the clouds and chased away the pale mists that hung between the peaks of the Sugar-loaves and Bray Head, gilding the rich pasture-lands that skirted the shore, and lighting up the spray and foam that the paddle-wheels tossed up, till it looked like a shower of diamonds. They swept past the Kish lightship, rocked like a cradle by the ground-swell, left the cliffs of Howth to the right, with its lighthouse, up to which the surge was licking with long white tongues, and to the left Dalkey Island and its old grey tower; and then in a few minutes rounded the battery wall and into Kingstown Harbour.

Just as the black nose of the steamer was pointed straight to her berth alongside the Carlisle Pier, a sudden squall came

tearing down between the Three Rock and Killiney, and curling the tops of the waves inside the walls, swept right in Mr. Satterthwaite's face, wetting his eyes with the spray, so that one might fancy he was crying, and half blinding him. A sailor was standing near, and laughed.

"That was a squall for you, sir. I wonder will it reach the fishing-boats there off the Mugglins. I've seen a yacht cap-sized in the bay by a less one."

Then the sunlight shone out with redoubled strength from behind the little black cloud that had caused the mischief, and leaping from rock to rock along the coast, lit up the whole bay as with a smile. The long white terraces of Kingstown shone out as if newly washed and clean, and the wet black hull of the great man-of-war ship glistened above the dull dirty green of the harbour water. Mr. Satterthwaite

turned to have another look at Howth, but the packet had reached her berth where the express train was drawn up in readiness; and then began that scene of confusion and disorder so familiar to travellers. The steam from the boiler began to escape with a noise that was absolutely deafening, and to this was added the screeching of the railway engine, intensified by the echo in the roof of the hideous and utterly useless black shed erected under pretext of shelter on the pier. The porters pushed and shoved and fought with each other, to the admiration of a crowd of hangers-on who were in every one's way.

At last, abandoning some of his effects in the hope that their being fully addressed to his hotel might ensure their safety, Mr. Satterthwaite in despair took his seat in the express. The last lady had been helped in, the last ravenous porter had

been satisfied, or at least silenced, the engine had taken on its load of newspapers, etc., and away went the express to deposit its freight on the platform in Westland Row, when the same pell-mell of confusion again awaited the weary travellers.

By dint of strenuous exertion Mr. Satterthwaite got a couple of porters to burden themselves with the most important of his packages, and he reached at last a side door where cabs were drawn up in waiting. One cabman was disputing with a solitary old lady, who wanted to drive a bargain with him. A brother cabman driving off in glory with a pile of luggage and three unprotected females, cracked his whip at him as he passed, and shouted excitedly, "Arrah, Mooney, man! lave her to God, and run down there to the gintleman wid the trunks."

Mr. Mooney, thus adjured, seized his horse's head and dragged his vehicle to where the gentleman with the trunks was standing; but Satterthwaite, laughing as he was, ordered him back to his fare, and mounted an outside car, telling the porters he would send a man from the hotel to claim his property, and so with difficulty got away from the Babel. It was fine and sunshiny, and they splashed along through the lakes of mud which form the wonder and delight of the visitor to Dublin, at a rapid rate. The hotel was soon reached, and Mr. Satterthwaite, having despatched a messenger for his property, sat down to a good dinner, for which his long journey had given him an excellent appetite.

The next morning he left Dublin by the American mail at nine o'clock *en route* for the south. It was a gloomy, drizzling morning, and the bleak vista of bog and

treeless weed-grown fields which form the central plateau of Ireland was desolate-looking and depressing in the extreme. The rich pastures and woods of Meath, with the far-off glimpse of the Dublin mountains, were soon left behind, and the long dun-coloured reach of the Bog of Allen, of which the monotonous outline was broken only by sedge-grown pools, overhung by a tawny mist, out of which the grey herons rose with a startled cry as the train passed, stretched before the Englishman's eyes. He got out at an intermediate station to meet a friend with whom he had some business to transact and parcels from London to deliver, and in the afternoon a later train picked him up, and about seven o'clock deposited him at the district station nearest to Darraghmore. He found his baggage waiting for him on the platform, and gave the stationmaster

orders to keep it until carts could be sent over to carry it to Rosslyne.

As he turned out of the little wooden shed which did duty for a railway station, he was hailed by a voice which fell somewhat familiarly on his ear, and a dusky figure clad in a tattered frieze coat jumped forward.

“Glad to see your honour back. Want a car, sir? Sure I’m the boy drove you to Darraghmore from Ballycormack then, last autumn.”

“Are you indeed? Then you may take me back to Darraghmore now; never mind anybody else, my man, I’ll settle that.”

And Mr. Satterthwaite swung his valise on one side of the mail-car, and mounting on the other, wrapped his ulster round him.

The driver grinned with delight, real or affected, and whipped up his horse.

Plunging and rocking, they reached the stony, hilly lane which led up to the station. As soon as the level high-road left him at liberty to disengage his attention from his steed, the jarvey turned his head round and surveyed his fare-amicably.

“I hope you like Rosslyne, Mr. Satterthwaite, sir. Rale proud I am to be drivin’ you home this night.”

“Ha! how did you know I was Mr. Satterthwaite?”

“Augh! sure, ’tis well known the English gintleman was here last autumn bought Rosslyne; an’ a purty spot it is—lovely grass land as there is in the county. You bought a rale bargain, sir. I hope I’ll be drivin’ ‘herself’ across wan of these days soon.”

Cruickshank’s or Leech’s pencil alone could do justice to the expression of the

countenance which the carman bent side-long on his fare. The inquisitiveness, drollery, and cunning therein blended were beyond mere description. Satterthwaite shook his head gravely.

“No offence, your honour!” Then with a reckless dash, “Sure we were all hopin’ to see the mistress comin’ in along o’ you. Houses do be lonely widout the ladies whatever. Sure meself, now, after the owld mother died, till I got married, I didn’t know what’d become of me.”

Mr. Satterthwaite indulged in a silent internal laugh for a moment or two, then abruptly turned the question.

“Whose land is this we are passing on the river-side?”

“’Tis Lord Comerford’s, sir, all you see along there; ’tis no good.”

It was almost too dark to see anything. Satterthwaite could hear the harsh dry

rustle of the reeds as the swift eddies of the stream caught and swayed them, and a faint sound came from the dark network of the trees above. There had been showers all day, and the hedgerows, wild and tangled as they were, gave out a sweet spring odour. The blackthorn trees were covered with snowy blossom, and pale primroses lighted up the dark recesses among the briars. Late and half dark as it was, the blackbirds were noting to one another, and their clear bell-like voices filled the woods. Right or left Satterthwaite could discern no traces of lights or a house ; not a sound, not even a dog's bark, gave token of the presence of human beings. The road was good and fairly level, and the old mail-cart bowled along smartly. After a short interval of silence he hailed the driver again.

“What is there new or strange in Dar-
raghstown since ?”

“Sorra much, yer honour,” replied the driver with alacrity. “We got wan of the Miss Perrys married to a Dublin gentleman—I forget his name—anyhow, they were married afore Lent came in. An’ let me see, Bill Kelly run off and let in the bank for seventy pounds of a bill; he did so, my blessin’ to him. I suppose you hard the old lord was come back. Did he come before or after your honour was here?”

“What old lord do you mean?”

“Old Lord Darraghmore, to be sure, yer honour. I was tellin’ you about the family when I drove you past the owld house out on the other side of the town towards Ballycormack.”

“Oh dear, yes; the Ferrard family—to be sure, I remember. And do you say they have come back to that old ruined house?”

“Not to the house, yer honour; they’ve taken Milligan’s house at the corner of the Comerford Road. They came here just the first week of October. The owld lord and wan of the sons landed down to the hotel, and they stayed a week or two there; then the owld nurse, that’s always wid them, hired rooms in Milligan’s; but, faith, Milligan found it better to give them up the whole house to theirselves, so he an’ the wife went off out to live on their farm at Ballycormack, and the lord is to pay twenty pounds a year for the house.”

“What on earth brought them back?”

“I dunno, sir; he’s breakin’ up fast, an’ maybe, as the people say, he wants to die in the owld place, or near to it.”

“How many of them are there?”

“Himself, an’ two boys—two divils-clips of boyoes the same—oh, bedad, yis; and the daughter, a tall, swarthy-looking thing,

with a pair of eyes like two burnt holes in a blanket. The big fellow wint off since they came here. I hard he went to Austria to join the army along with the stepbrother. No wan knew he was goin', or a thing; he slipped off wan morning, went across the fields to the train, and a bit of a note came in a few days to 'himself' to say he was gone out to Claud—at laste, that's the account Mistress M'Gonigle, that thrawn owld wan that lives wid them, gave in the town."

"That leaves but one boy at home, then?"

"No, no, yer honour; this was the big one, Clan. He has three sons by the last wife. There's Char and Isidor there yet."

"And how old is the girl, Miss Ferrard?"

"Augh, a slip; seventeen, or less. She was sent off, I believe, to her lady aunts in

England somewhere to be edgicated and brought up, bud fait she walked in one morning as cool as a cucumber. 'Twas myself druv her over. She got out of the train wan raw cold morning, there, last October, an' she looked all round her as wild and startled just like a hare; an' at last she come up to me, an' says she, 'Do you go to Darraghmore?'—'No, miss,' says I; ' 'tis Darraghstown to the hotel I'm goin'.' Wid that she sat up on the car. Young Devereux, the son of the farmer that has the old place of Darraghmore now, grazin' it be the same token, was sittin' on the same side wid her. An' he went to say somethin' p'lite to her, the misfortunate gossoon. She gev him a look, he towld me, near took the sight out of his eyes, an' she gother her skirts up about her—och, pillilew! He thought he'd never get off the car, though they're the best of

friends now." And the driver laughed at the recollection till his old vehicle shook. "An' when we got to the place and stopped, she lays a five-shillin'-piece on the seat of the car—an' the fare only a shillin', mind you, and for the matter of that I wasn't goin' to take it from her father's daughter at all at all—an' she up the stips of the hotel as light as a fly. Well, well ! Blake, the landlord, he towld me she asked him as grand as you plase, 'Is my father, Lord Darraghmore, here yet?' so he said not, an' pointed out Milligan's house up at the corner of the Comerford Road, and said he was there, so she turned herself round an' away wid her up home."

"Is she there still?" asked Mr. Satterthwaite with a tone of real interest, and breathing a hope that he might yet get a look at this strange specimen of humanity.

"She is, av coorse, yer honour. I seen

her out walkin' yesterday wid them tear-coat Perrys. Augh, musha! to see them together! 'tis like this owld garron harnessed wid wan ov me Lord Comerford's fine-bred hunters. There's nothin' like blood, sir, nothin'. The walk of her, and her head set straight up! an' she niver turns to look to the right or left of her, while them Perrys' necks is like the pivot or the weathercock, not a blue-bottle fly bud they must look after it; an' the feet o' them! bedad, they might walk on the wather like St. Pether, any day."

The car drew up now at the hotel where Mr. Satterthwaite intended to put up for some days before translating himself to his new residence at Rosslyne. He had made a cursory examination of the house the previous autumn when at Ballycormack. The roof was in fair order, but the chimneys were all choked with rubbish, the

jackdaws having, with the usual perverse taste of that animal, chosen to build in the chimney-pots in preference to the fine pine-trees of the wood. These, and many other matters, the new owner of Rosslyn revolved in his mind as he sat after dinner noting down in his memorandum-book the various items as they occurred to him, to be considered on his visit to Rosslyn next day. There was the garden to be made, and a charming one that southern slope, studded with graceful beeches and gnarled old hawthorns, that extended beneath the drawing-room windows, would make. He remembered how prettily the pond lay at the foot of it when he had seen it last autumn. The overhanging chestnuts and alders half in shadow, half in sun; the little waterhens darting to and fro; the long-feathered heads of the bulrushes and catstails dipping in the glassy pool, and

mingling with the fading autumn tints of the foliage reproduced in the water. Wild and neglected as the place was, it had charmed him. His friends had laughed at his project, and declared it was an impossible freak, but Satterthwaite vowed to make a little Eden of Rosslyne, and then bring them to witness his success.

Between seven and eight in the evening the landlord came into his room and disturbed his reverie by presenting him with a card.

"The gentleman is below, sir, and has called to see you."

"Mr. Perry! oh yes," said the Englishman; "show him in."

Then a burly man about fifty years of age entered. He held his hat in one hand and advanced with the other outstretched to greet the stranger.

"Mr. Satterthwaite," said he in a loud

resonant voice, "allow me to be the first to welcome you to Darraghstown. I am delighted to make your acquaintance."

Satterthwaite shook hands cordially enough with the big man, and invited him to be seated, running his eye as he did so critically over his new friend. He knew him to be the lawyer of the district, and he certainly did look an intelligent, thoroughly wide-awake customer, but the well-worn, ill-brushed suit of tweed, rough hair and unshorn chin, gave him rather the look of a working farmer than a professional man.

"How did you come to think of settling among us, Mr. Satterthwaite? An Englishman like you, and from London too, now, to come and bury yourself in this outlandish spot, hay?"

He spoke in a hearty sincere tone, with a smile that showed a set of large white

teeth, not altogether a bad-looking fellow. The grey eyes were rather obliquely set, however, and the irregular profile was imperious enough for Jove himself.

"My friend can bully," thought the Englishman, "when he cannot wheedle, or I am mistaken."

"Well, sir," replied Satterthwaite, "last year I was staying at a shooting-box the other side of the mountains with friends, and I liked the country and the natives so well, that I, being on the outlook at the time for an investment for some spare thousands, thought I'd buy a place here, so Rosslyne chanced to suit me, and I've come over to put it to rights."

"Goodish lay of land along there, now. That side of the Rack is very fine grazing land. The wood, too, you've the right of clearing, han't you? The man that had it before you went in for fancy farming,

ruined himself very fast: machines and patent manures; went in for tillage, in fact. A thundering mistake that."

"Do you say so? I had entertained some notion of breaking up the low meadows at the back of the house; I flatter myself I'm rather a dab at farming. I've a fine home-farm at Langdale."

"Ah, yes—in Buckinghamshire; that's a horse of another colour, Mr. Satterthwaite. I have three farms now of my own, leaseholds anyhow, in this place, and I've every inch under grass; grazing and dairy, that's what pays. Why, sir, it stands to reason: look at the cost of labour; and mind you, it's not the rate of wages I mean by that. No! it's the amount of work you get for your money; their whole plan is to scheme and idle the day away. They've an idea they make

work for themselves that way—just like those trades unionists.”

“Do these people belong to a trades union then?”

As he asked the question Satterthwaite rose and rang the bell.

“Not they. A labourers’ union was tried here, and fell to pieces directly; they have all the faults of unionists, anyhow. The rascals!” continued the attorney, “every moment they steal from you they consider a gain to themselves. Tillage, sir, is impossible in Ireland as things are now. They must get high wages, and they won’t give any work in return; I defy any amount of capital or patience to withstand the cost of workmen here. An honest day’s work is not to be got out of them.”

“Then you don’t consider that the high price of meat, or the climate, as some say,

caused the wonderful change in farming here?"

"Not a bit of it; did I not try the experiment for myself there ten years ago? I'd have to be up before them in the morning, and I'd have to stand over them all day long in the fields and never take my eyes off them. Slieven vagabonds—I never will make up what I've lost by them. I've sub-let two of my farms to a Limerick butter-factor, who pays me eleven pound a head for each cow and provides his own servants and dairywoman. In fact, I just draw an income from it and have nothing to do. People can't be got to work a farm so as to leave you any profit, and you look after own interests."

Then the landlord entered, in response to Mr. Satterthwaite's bell.

"What can I offer you, Mr. Perry?"

Bring me a pint of your best pale sherry."

"As usual, Blake," replied the attorney, nodding to the landlord, who vanished, speedily to return with a tray bearing the desired bottle of sherry, and a smoking kettle and decanter of whiskey for the lawyer.

Mr. Perry lost no time in mixing himself a huge tumbler of reeking toddy, and pressed his host to follow his example, but he declined and kept to his sherry. The very smell of the concoction was stifling.

"Still, Mr. Perry," said Mr. Satterthwaite, returning to the subject, "there is a good deal of tillage land in Ireland; surely everybody does not find it the dead loss you do?"

"Certainly not, sir; the small farmer finds it profitable, maybe, to till; that is, he can make a sort of living by it, more

than I could by tilling my eight hundred acres. I'd be in the workhouse in five years—less, begad! Up to twenty or five and twenty acres you could do fairly with tillage.”

“How so?”

“Why! because the small farmer does the work himself; the wife looks after the dairy. Ay, an’ ’tis from those same small farms the best butter comes. It’s not the professional buttermaker with her eighteen and twenty pounds a year that makes the best butter. The case lies in a nut-shell, Mr. Satterthwaite. They do their own work; their profits are not carried off by the hired labourers; the man has no outlay, if he has no capital itself. Of course a good deal is ‘slobbered,’ as we call it here, for want of labour and so forth, but in the long-run the fellow scrapes a living, and sometimes a profit,

out of it, more than we should do, I promise you."

"Humph! I must reconsider my project," thought Satterthwaite; then aloud: "You have a fair sprinkling of respectable people hereabouts. Any society?"

"Society—um—well—there's the bank manager and his wife; a Miss Murphy from Dublin; and there's a great friend and crony of mine, Tom Fair—you passed his place coming up from the station. Then there are the Hollahans of Castle Darragh there above on the Ballycormack Road. A couple of daughters there with more pedigree than money, I take it. And then the other Hollahans, their cousins, a great family living in a big old place called Brophystown, as you go out towards Rosslyne; not to mention the Reallys of Bella Vista, as you come

down to the bridge where the Rack and Darragh meet."

"Really—*Realè* perhaps." The Englishman repeated the name with the Italian pronunciation. "Surely that is foreign."

"Foreign, Mr Satterthwaite—haw, haw," and the lawyer gave forth a huge laugh. "That's a good one; a butter-factor from Limerick that married a Protestant Shoneen, and turned his coat, and then his decent father's name from Reilly to Really. He is very wealthy; the wife is a queer soul. She was brought up abroad with relations of hers who held high positions in Vienna, I believe. She kept house, I know, for some generals there. When they died she had to go as governess or companion, and met Really at Harrogate, or some English watering-place, and married him—just for a living, I suppose."

“Humph !” said Satterthwaite carelessly. “Among them all, you manage some society, I suppose? There are a good many young people, are there not? Try this cigar.”

“Society, well—um—thanks; that has a real fine smell. Ye see, this is a queer spot—so it is. As people rise in the world, they generally try to kick down the steps behind them; not only that, but to keep down the next comer. And as to society or social intercourse in Darraghstown, there’s none. The bank manager, Scanlan, was all very well till he married a Dublin girl. Then when he brought her here, a few of the county families from outside called upon her. After that, of course, not one of the townspeople would she notice. So now she’s left in solitary state; and the grandees, having paid their duty, left it there I suppose; she’s never

seen them since. Then the Hollahans of Castle Darragh won't recognise their first cousins, the Brophystown people. Why, I don't know. And the Reallys are queer devils that nobody could keep terms with. She has a tongue like a knife, and he's a born fool. Sam Fair's wife and daughter, again, won't know the Hollahans of Brophystown, and the Castle Darragh people won't know them. Augh!" concluded the attorney, "you must ask some of my women-folk the ins and outs of it. I don't bother my head over it. Right good cigar this is, sir."

"What a microcosm of Irish society!" thought Satterthwaite to himself, with difficulty restraining a laugh. "As well as I can follow my friend, not two families of the half-dozen seem to be on speaking terms with one another. What extraordinary blind folly! And I suppose they

are thirty or forty miles from a town. The idea of wilfully destroying the only possibility of making life bearable in such a backwoods settlement as it is—Well, well!” said he aloud, “one would imagine people would bury all their little differences, or agree to differ, just—er—for the public good. You have the elements of a tolerable society now right to hand, if only properly used.”

“Augh!” returned the attorney, “what sort of place is it to be spending the best of a man’s life in at all? Pooh!” he continued wrinkling up his snub nose with an expression of disgust. “A wretched hole like this! Dead-alive one is all the time in it. I’ve been here now, since I settled down in my father-in-law’s place, thirty years, sir; and I never thought to be half that time in it. Augh, sir, London for me! There’s some life and stir of

business in London. We're wretched, miserable creatures here ; lost and wasted entirely. The people here are barbarians—pure barbarians. If I had my will I would not spend an hour in this country. What's the use of making money in such a place ? Lord, man, you live more in one week in London than here ! Ireland's so poor, so behind the rest of the world. I'm sure you noticed Dublin yourself—a wretched, one-horse place !”

“ Is it any wonder,” thought the Englishman, “ that this country is in the state it is ? and yet this fellow doesn't scruple to make his money in it. The better class Irish are as bad as the absentee landlords. Absenteeism, indeed ! They are all infected with it. I have no patience with this !”

“ Ah, well !” said he aloud, and as gravely as he could, though there was a

tone of contempt in his voice ; “ I don’t approve of this crowding up to town. There’s quite too much of that sort of thing. I declare London is too large, too overgrown. Society is utterly over-thronged for comfort. Upon my word, it isn’t decent to ask your friends to your house in such numbers that there isn’t actually standing-ground for them, and you know it. I am quite in favour of decentralisation. Now, Mr. Perry, as a practical man, will you give me your opinion of Home Rule? I look upon Home Rule with rather favourable eyes, considering, as I do, that the deportation of talent and—er—everything best worth keeping in this country is a serious loss to it. Now give me your candid opinion.”

Mr. Perry took an enormous draught of high-coloured toddy, then laid himself well back in his chair, stretching his long,

sturdy limbs to their full length, as he replied :

“My individual opinion, which you may take, Mr. Satterthwaite, for what it is worth, is summed up in the word ‘Bosh!’ But though I shouldn’t care for that to be generally known, if you’d care to hear the opinions of Darraghstown as affording a fair sample of those held throughout the country in general, I’ll repeat them to you. I’m pretty familiar with them.”

“By all means.”

Mr. Satterthwaite’s attention was divided between the attorney and his talk. Perry certainly was a study in his way.

“Well, first of all, you know it has been asserted that the Home Rulers would interrupt the trade—I mean the export—of cattle, butter, and whiskey, between this country and England; that’s the only trade there is. The leaders of the scheme have

even taken the trouble to deny this officially. I can tell them that not a herd of cattle goes along the road to market but the lookers-on breathe prayers for the day of Home Rule to come, when all that fine food will be kept at home for their use instead of being carried off by the English. They'll say to you, 'Look at the prices of meat and butter; sure, we'd have it dirt cheap if was not being sent out of the country.' And not only here, but in Cork and Dublin—in all the large cities where they are supposed to know better and to be more enlightened than the peasantry—the same mischievous notions are current. The only thing to be said in reply to this is, that the people who hold these notions are not voters, and would have no influence with an Irish Parliament (save the mark !), if such a thing were established."

"Ay ! but you know one of the darling

projects of the agitators is to extend the franchise. That's their game in earnest."

"Right you are, Mr. Satterthwaite; if they are in earnest about anything. Then the fixity of tenure people; they go in for Home Rule in a sort of blind way, thinking they'll get their demands settled by it. We have a good sprinkling of them hereabouts. There are also a set of out-and-outers—I don't well know what to call them—who insist on a heavy absentee tax; and, indeed, go further—would confiscate the lands of all English proprietors. Faith, I think the native ones wouldn't be let off scot free either! One or two returned Americans have infected the lot; they want a republic, a president—O'Donovan Rossa, I suppose—and a Fenian treasurer; in short, a New York Government. Haw, haw! Home Rule was the fashion here awhile ago among the Protestant gentry—

that is, before the Tories got in again. I remember old Fitz Ffoulkes, the rector, before he commuted, compounded, and cut, declaring himself for it, body and soul. Augh! the Liberal spill extinguished a good deal of their patriotic fire. The whole thing is a humbug to my mind. These Irish are not fit for self-government at all."

Satterthwaite turned so as to face the lawyer, and said, in a cold voice :

" I fancied, Mr. Perry, that I had seen your name in a list of people attending a Home Rule meeting, the Monday—"

" Law, yes ! I belong to the association, of course ; every one must, you know. But that doesn't hinder me having my own opinions of it all the time."

This was uttered in a tone of cool effrontery, as if he were unconscious of the meaning of his own words.

The Englishman nodded gravely, and changed the conversation. He was disgusted at the duplicity of his new acquaintance ; but, unhappily, not surprised, for he had only too good reason to believe that it was nothing out of the common.

“Who is the clergyman that has taken Mr. Fitz Ffoulke’s place?”

“Oh ! some man comes over by the last train on Saturday night, and goes away by the first on Monday morning. I’ve heard his name, but I forget it.”

“You have a doctor?”

“A couple of them. Old Bruton—past his work now nearly, but if I wanted any one I’d have him before any other—and a young fellow just down from Queen’s University with a licence to kill ; decent sort of harmless chap he is ; lives up next door to me, in Comerford Terrace.”

“Take some more punch, Mr. Perry?”

"No more, Mr. Satterthwaite, thank you. I must be going. I wanted to mention that I'm driving across to Ballycormack to-morrow; if you're going near Rosslyne, I'll be happy to give you a seat. And, Mr. Satterthwaite, will you give us the pleasure of your company to dinner when we return? My wife and daughters will be very glad to see you, in a plain, neighbourly way."

Satterthwaite drew a quick, short breath as he replied. He had his doubts as to the desirability of making the acquaintance of the Perry family, who, to judge from the specimen now before him, must be far below his own rank and position. Of course, as a single man, he was, in a way, unfettered, and free to choose any or every class of associates. Besides, accepting an invitation to dinner in this way did not bind him to the people; it might be a

mere business overture on the part of Perry. At any rate, the Carringtons and Newtons of Crosshills were away, and he might just as well go as not. Then, too, he was curious to get a glimpse of the interior of the Perry household; it would be a new experience. So, prompted by a purely exploring instinct, he replied cordially :

“ I shall be very happy indeed—very. At what time do you start for Ballycormack ?”

“ Will eleven be too early for you—no ? Good-night then.”

“ Good-night,” replied Satterthwaite.

And so ended his first day at Darraghstown.



CHAPTER II.

“ Il y’a une chose qu’on n’a point vue sous le ciel, et que selon toutes les apparences on ne verra jamais : c’est une petite ville qui n’est choisée en aucuns partis ; où les familles sont unis, et où les cousins se voient avec confiance . . . où la querelle des rangs ne se reveille pas à tous moments, ou le doyen vit bien avec ses chanoines, où les chanoines ne dédaignent pas les chapelains, et où ceux-ci souffrent les chantres.”

LA BRUYÈRE.



HE next morning at about eleven o'clock, Satterthwaite was lounging in the window waiting for Perry, and killing time with a London

paper two days old, when at last the sound of a vehicle without made him look up. There was Lawyer Perry pulling up his gig before the door. A tolerably well-bred horse was in the shafts, as Satterthwaite, who took a good long look at the turn-out while waiting the lawyer's message, acknowledged to himself. However, the animal was ill-groomed and dirty, the mud of a week at least was crusted on the wheels and splashboard, and the harness-plates were nearly green.

"Good-morning, Mr. Perry," said he, descending the steps, "a charming day."

"Ay; you do well to bring an umbrella, though—it will rain, I've no doubt. Come along, Mr. Satterthwaite, I'm a quarter late."

Satterthwaite jumped in, and took his place on the dirty cushion beside Perry,

who, holding up his horse tightly, turned into the main street at a racing pace.

"Curse those pigs!" he exclaimed suddenly, cutting with his whip at a long-backed pig that dashed almost under the horse's feet. "One of these days I'll break my neck among them. You'd think the street was made for them."

"Have they no pig-sties in these parts?" asked Satterthwaite, looking at the row of wretched cabins along the side of the road.

"Pig-sties!" repeated Perry, with a scornful laugh. "If they'd a pig-sty they'd go live in it, and let lodgings in the house. Look at those cabins, there, stoop your head and look in the doors; did ever you see fitter pig-sties than those!"

"I never saw more *unfit* housing for human beings. Why, you should have any amount of fever in this town."

"So there is," he replied. "Ask Cartan;

they die mainly of fever hereabouts. And look at all the sore eyes ; every second man or woman has bad eyes, whatever's the reason of it."

"Bad air and food, of course. That's your chapel, Mr. Perry ; I was in it last time I was here."

"Ay, fine building, isn't it? Cost eleven thousand pounds."

"Eleven thousand ! eleven thousand !" repeated Satterthwaite, as if he doubted his own ears ; "surely you don't mean it ; where is there anything to show for it ?"

"Faith, I don't know ; but then I'm no judge. I know there's that much paid already, and there's more to come yet."

"For that building ! oh ! it's fabulous !" said Satterthwaite, astonished ; and he turned round and looked in amazement at the unimposing block of grey limestone.

"Father Quaide, the parish priest,

wouldn't like to hear you say so, I can tell you. He has spent ten years between begging and borrowing—God forgive me, I was going to say stealing—to get the money together. You see the way they do it is to fix upon a plan, and then the architect runs up the building and the bill. What do priests know of business?"

"Is the whole proceeding left in the priest's hands then? Do you not have a committee appointed, to inquire into the expenses, and approve plans, and that sort of thing?"

"Phew?" whistled Perry contemptuously. "His reverence does it all. I'd like to see the man would interfere with him. We pay down our money and look pleasant over it, and ask no questions. Sure it's the best after all. He worked hard to build that church there, if ever man did; and spent his own money on it, if he spent

ours too. He sent a man to America to beg for him, and told him, for every pound he brought for him, he might keep one for himself."

"I don't think the American subscribers would approve that, would they?"

"What matter? the fellow was able to stock a fine farm when he came home. There's only one thing I dislike in it, and that is the altar. Why couldn't Quaide get an altar made in Dublin? 'twould be a sight handsomer than that Italian stone one he has there. The priests, I declare, think nothing's right unless it comes from foreign parts. Those statues now, those grand painted ones. What do you think of them, Mr. Satterthwaite. He brought them all from Munich."

The lawyer turned a doubtful eye on his companion as he asked the question. Satterthwaite, who had a vivid recol-

lection of the gaudy red and blue clad giants, could scarcely refrain from laughing—not at them indeed, but at the idea of an educated man like Perry having a doubt on the question? Tempting as it was he restrained himself, and answered demurely :

“H’m! I knew they came from Munich; yes, the style is unmistakably German.—What in the world has Christian art come to—what frightful revolution has taken place,” thought he to himself, “that such hideous mockeries should be sanctioned!”

“They’re all the fashion,” continued Perry; “at least so I’m told. Any way, I see every priest buying them for the chapels. Faith, they’re too like big dolls for my taste.”

“Well!” said Satterthwaite sharply, and with a tone of contempt in his voice, “why did you not have a committee of

the leading townsfolk—to lay out this money—your own money, and for your own church?”

“Bah! that’s never done, and down here, who would be on the committee? men that know nothing and care nothing about what ought to be. The church cost eleven thousand or twelve thousand, and there it is; every one knows it, and it does well enough. Chuck, chuck! woa there, will ye?”

The horse showed some restiveness at having to pass a cart or two on the road, and his attention was concentrated on him for a moment or two. His great strong hand soon brought the animal to a sense of its duty, and they spun along at a fine pace.

“That’s a neat-built animal, Mr. Perry; young too.”

“Well, yes; rising five, right good ser-

viceable horse now," he added, turning his sharp grey eyes upon him, "for anybody wanting a good hack to ride or drive. I got him over a year ago; my eldest daughter takes a turn of him too, betimes. He's a sweet-tempered beast enough, just in want of exercise, that's all; and then—"

Mr. Perry turned a greedy scrutinising eye on the gentleman beside him, who, reading his meaning as clearly as print, made haste to answer in an off-hand tone :

"I must get my horses over as soon as this place is fit. I really forget what the stabling is like; I've a hunter or two that I ought to have got rid of before leaving England."

Perry took this in with a contraction of his bushy eyebrows and a smile at the same time, as if he, though disappointed, could recognise an equal in the game, so he answered cheerfully :

“Bad time to be selling hunters, unless they’re not worth keeping over for the next season. Devereux, a neighbour of mine, raises some fine horses on his farm at Tobergeen. He has all the ground on the river-side of your place. It was the property originally of Lord Darraghmore.”

“Lord Darraghmore—ah, yes. Mr. Perry, can you tell me anything of that strange brood? They’re living beside you now.”

“So they are; wish they were farther too. A litter of foxes would be as pleasant neighbours to my poultry-yard. I hear of a couple of ducks missing this morning; the servant says no fox took them. I wager ’twas that Char Ferrard.”

“Is it possible? are they in the habit of that sort of thing?”

“Habit! I believe you! They have about four hundred a year, I collect it for them,

but it all goes like smoke. Clan Ferrard bought a couple of dogs—he gave twenty guineas for them—last November; took them off with him when he found it convenient to clear out. That gipsy of a girl is much like them, too; she now and again favours my folks with her company, but they can make nothing of her. Augh, they're a wretched pack, wretched! Most these real old families are the same here, run out of everything, utter vagabonds. I could point out half a dozen no better than Darraghmore, if they were only as poor."

"Dear me! I thought that sort of thing was extinct here, since the famine and the Encumbered Estates Act, anyhow."

"Some of them managed to weather that storm, and 'twould have been just as well they hadn't. Look, down there beside you is Darraghmore."

The gig was now at the very spot where Satterthwaite and his friend the driver had halted that September day the previous year, and it was with a smile of recognition that he obeyed his companion's behest. Down below them apparently, although it, too, was on the top of a slope, lay the great old house. The fine stretch of demesne before it leading down the edge of the river was dotted with cattle, and the remains of the old plantations, where araucarias and laurels were struggling for life among brambles and furze, yet were plainly visible. The Darragh, swollen by the rain, tore impetuously past; wreaths of pure white foam glistened in the sun, and encircled the little waterfalls among the rocks as with a collar of gem-strewn lace, and the noise and brawl of it reached their ears on the top of the hill. The willows dipped long branches into the water,

and through the dark network of the woods the faint green of the promised leaves was stealing.

“We take a turn here now towards Ballycormack, and then a by-road takes you to Rosslyne. It’s a pretty spot that, but there’s a good deal of waste land. That pond now at the foot of the slope to the side of the house, you know, that ought to be drained.”

“Drain the pond! why, that’s the prettiest thing in it. Wait till I get waterlilies stuck in it, and have the slope laid out in a pleasure-ground. I wouldn’t drain that pond for half the purchase-money. It will be the centre of my garden.”

Perry looked at the speaker with an expression of amused disgust.

“We don’t go in for that sort of thing here,” said he; “and that slope would

grow vegetables very handy and convenient to the house."

"Right under my drawing-room window!" cried Satterthwaite, as if doubting his ears.

Perry's under lip only curled the more, and his aggressive snub-nose took an upward cast. Just then they turned a sharp corner, and the by-road leading to Rosslyne entrance-gate was before them.

"It looks fairly dry, Mr. Satterthwaite, and I must ask you to excuse my leaving you up to the door. I have an appointment at twelve, and it will take me seven or eight minutes to climb that hill; in fact, I'm due this minute. If I come back for you in an hour and a half from this, will you drive across to Kershaws, five miles out to the left there on the Dublin Road?"

"I will, thank you; I shall do very well now," replied Satterthwaite, getting down

carefully off his perch. "I'll look out for you about two, then."

The attorney drove off, and he turned up the narrow road, keeping in the middle of it—footway there was none—to avoid the low-hanging brambles and hawthorns which hung down so thickly as almost to bar the passage. A quarter of an hour's walking through what might not have been out of place as an entrance avenue to the castle of the Sleeping Beauty in the Wood, brought him to a swing gate opening on a pretty but weed-choked carriage-drive. Following this, uphill every step, he found himself facing Rosslyne, a three-storied building of limestone—luckily not plastered over, as was the custom among the benighted natives—with windows somewhat in the Elizabethan style, perched on the very brow of a hill, woods to the right and left, and before and behind a fine clear

open. It looked inviting enough just now, lonely as it was; the mildness and sweetness of the air, the music of the birds—it must be alive with woodquests, their cooing seemed to form the bass to the melody of the thrushes and blackbirds—lent it delightful charms in the eyes of its new owner. He stood for a few minutes enjoying the prospect, then turned to follow the winding of the carriage-drive, which, indeed, the trees alone indicated, for it was carpeted in grass as thick and close-set as that of the turf beside it, and had pursued his way for a few yards only when a sudden commotion roused him. A hare dashed across the lawn, hotly followed by a great brown dog. Puss doubled and turned, and finally both disappeared among the undergrowth at his side. Satterthwaite, anxious to see the sport, rushed quickly after the dog, but found his

passage barred by an impenetrable thicket, so he ran back again to the open and looked about, listening eagerly from the other side. It seemed to him that he could hear the crashing of the dead twigs as if feet were rapidly passing, and then a tall figure in a dark dress flitted by an opening among the stems.

He crossed the lawn hastily and entered the wood. Not a sign or sound was there to be heard; then he pushed his way with difficulty down to the chestnuts by the pond. There was a ruined summer-house near it, and he opened it and looked in. No, it was empty, and the spiders' webs were undisturbed.

"No use going farther," thought he; "these poachers know the place better than I do, and I must get my work over before Perry comes." Some of the Ballycormack people, no doubt. I'll teach them

a lesson ;” and Mr. Satterthwaite, in his vexation, heedlessly walked ankle-deep into the green sludge formed by the overflow of the pond. He picked his steps out, and crossed to ascend the hill again to the house, but a sudden sound—a laugh actually, behind—caused him to jump round quickly. He was barely in time to see a female figure disappear in the thicket.

“Well,” thought he, “what a fool I was not to have looked behind that summer-house as well as into it! Who on earth can that be?” Then he laughed at his own discomfiture, and walked away into the house. He reached the library in time to see the same dog recross the lawn with the hare in his mouth.

“This is by no means a joke,” thought the lord of the manor, scratching his chin thoughtfully. Then he went to work

examining and measuring, and found the time pass quickly enough. Perry's gig drew up at the door before he had half finished.

"Well, how are you getting on? It's in very fair order, is it not?" said he, looking round.

"Fair order!" repeated Satterthwaite; "it's in a shocking condition, I think. But I saw some poachers at work here." Then he detailed his adventure on the lawn.

Perry looked thoughtful for a moment.

"What sort of dog? A big old brown brute, eh?"

"Exactly; he stopped the hare pretty thoroughly."

Perry laughed out.

"Be gad! that's the Ferrards! You have had a visit from the tribe, I wager. You saw no one?"

"I did, though. When I turned off

after searching the summer-house I heard a laugh, and I got sight of a tall female figure in black darting off through the trees."

"Well, that was Hel, no doubt of it. She hunts in couples with Isidor, the youngest brother. By Jove! there, last October they played the deuce among Comerford's pheasants. They never could be caught, but they got off the birds without ever using a gun or trap. Boiled barley, Paddy Sheehan told me, with a hog's bristle in every grain, just choked off the pheasant quietly, and then they bagged them; and the salmon the same. Char, I'm told, stands to his neck night after night in the Rack, and see how he's never caught."

"Do they sell them? What the deuce does it mean? I can tell you I'll allow none of these tricks in this place."

"Sell them!" repeated Perry, "laws no, eat them. They never think of selling them, though indeed I think the shopkeepers where they deal come in for some of the spoils. They never sell them. But you see this whole district was once their own, and the people all know that, and have a sort of feeling for them in consequence."

"Oh, that's the way, is it?" said Satterthwaite dryly. He was stooping on the floor busy with a foot-rule, though, indeed, Perry's words interested him so infinitely more than his measurements, that he had to make them all over again.

"Are you taking the measure for a carpet?" asked the attorney.

"Yes, and new wainscoting. I shall want more than that, too. I'd better send to Dublin for a man to come down to make an estimate. I want painters and fitters of all sorts."

"Dublin! oh, don't do that; you can't go past Dan Cassidy that way. He'll do it all up for you, or you'll be very unpopular if you go to Dublin for anything. I daren't buy an ounce of tea out of Darraghstown."

Satterthwaite stared at him as he folded up his foot-rule.

"The cases are slightly different, Mr. Perry," said he as stiffly as he could. He was intensely amused at his new friend's presumption. He half suspected him of touting, and the attempt with regard to the horse in the morning had made him a little suspicious.

"True for you," returned Perry, who was by no means obtuse. "Of course I'm bound to deal with the people I get my living off; it's not so with you. All the same, you'd better keep on neighbourly terms with them, I can tell you."

Satterthwaite bit his lip.

“My servants will give them their custom, I dare say, but I doubt I’ll consent to poison myself with the vile drugs they call tea and wine for the sake of their goodwill. Let us go and have a look at the stabling.”

They went out into a large yard at the side sadly in need of new paving, and into a four-stalled stable. The fittings were in tolerable order.

“There’s a good poultry-house, nice closed yard, too, for your fowls,” said Perry, pointing to a well-fitted-up out-house.

“Ay; it will be time to stock that presently.”

“Hah! for the Ferrards’ accommodation!” grinned the lawyer.

“Wait till I catch the Ferrards—Miss Hel, as you call her. I’ll put her in the stocks—pound! What instrument of punishment have you here?”

Satterthwaite was not in earnest, but he was irritated by Perry, whose manner had assumed a dictatorial freedom rather offensive. He turned his back to him, and opening a small door in the yard wall, walked into what was once a garden, a large open slope, bordered on one side by a row of beautiful beech-trees, and at the west and south by high red brick walls. The fruit-trees, which had once been trained to this, had grown out of all shape, and in many cases had fallen forward and away from their fastenings. Privet hedges, which had perhaps not known pruning-shears for ten or more years, had grown together, so that the alleys were impassable; the centre of the garden had been ploughed up and cropped with potatoes the year before, and in a sunny corner lay the ruins of a greenhouse.

"What a desert!" said the new owner, looking round; "I wonder if there were grass-walks here? I think I'll have them laid down if not. Whoever chose this site knew what he was about."

"I've heard Bruton say this was a monks' garden once—ages ago, you know; before Cromwell, I suppose; and there used to be a ruin down in that field below, but the stones were carted off out of the way. Bruton can tell you, I dare say. There's a fine well there under that tree."

Satterthwaite walked over to a thicket of privet and box. He could see the opening of a well surrounded by a little flagged rim, which was moss-grown and damp-looking, but he could not get near enough to look in. A sun-dial, on the face of which a tuft of grass had taken root and was flourishing, stood there.

"That old rubbish can go, I suppose,"

said Perry, nodding contemptuously at the old thing.

“I’ll see about that,” said its owner distantly, who indeed by this time had formed a poor opinion of his friend’s æsthetic judgment. “The walls look solid enough. I’ll ripen peaches easily there.”

Perry sneered.

“Peaches! I’d think a deal more of cabbages.”

“We can have cabbages too, Mr. Perry, but not on the walls.”

Then they drove away. When they reached the town Satterthwaite got out at the hotel to write and forward his orders to the Dublin tradesmen, and in about an hour presented himself at the hall door of the Perrys’ house.

A dirty servant-girl showed him into a room on the right-hand side of a narrow entry. It was dark, but she returned

presently with a large lamp, which she set on the centre table, and then Mr. Satterthwaite had means to indulge his curiosity. The room was not large, and was lighted by three windows, two in front and one at the back ; these were curtained by dingy, faded green damask hangings. There were no muslin or lace hangings, and the white blinds were dirty. The carpet was green, with bouquets of enormous roses and lilies, and the chair-covers were the same ; a chiffonier, with plate-glass back, which reflected the vase of wax pears and fuchsias which stood before it ; a cottage piano, piled with torn and dirty music ; no ornaments, no nicknacks, pictures, or books. On the table lay some once gaudily-bound volumes ; “ ‘ Books of Beauty,’ I suppose,” said he to himself, and a thick green and gold volume of Moore’s “ Melodies ” served as a stand for the lamp. Satterthwaite,

whose quick eyes took in everything, opened one of the "Books of Beauty," as he at first fancied them; it proved to be a "Life of the Blessed Virgin," uncut, though grimy.

"This looks promising," said he to himself, and walking to the fireplace he placed his back against the chimney-piece, where under a broken glass shade an old gilt French clock enjoyed a sinecure. "What a room! I can hardly fancy there are women in this house; however, I suppose these antimacassars and bead-cushions represent them. Not a flower—even a primrose—faugh!"

Then the door opened and the Perry family trooped in. Mrs. Perry, a faded, untidy-looking woman, with a weak face and a querulous voice, introduced her four daughters to the stranger. They were healthy, bright-complexioned girls, hide-

ously dressed, and with fringes of ash-coloured hair. The eldest, a tall, awkward girl, with a shy, self-conscious manner, sat down near Satterthwaite, who, as soon as he had replied to her mother's common-places about the weather and his journey from London, good-naturedly began to talk to her.

"What a beautiful country this is, Miss Perry; I admire the scenery greatly."

"Oh, do you? I wonder at that now! we hate the country so."

Miss Perry spoke with a very strong brogue, drawling and unpleasant to the ear. He turned to the other sisters, who with wide-open pale-coloured eyes were staring at him.

"Is that so—you hate the country?"

"Oh yes," they all answered together; "we had rather——"

But the door opened at this second to

admit their father, and Satterthwaite observed the sudden change that took place in the manner and bearing of the girls and their mother. She seemed, indeed, to shrink before his eye, and the younger girls looked demure. Miss Perry alone seemed unaffected.

"Why isn't dinner ready?" he asked in a bullying voice.

"We are waiting for Doctor Cartan. He promised to be here at six," Mrs. Perry said deprecatingly.

"Go and tell them to send in dinner! Go!" he repeated, addressing the group of younger girls.

"Go, Lizzie," whispered the tallest of the three to the second.

"I won't. Do it, Eily. Eily!" As she spoke she pushed the youngest, a rather pretty girl of fourteen.

Miss Eily turned round a rebellious

countenance, but meeting the fiery glare which Perry turned full on the trio, she decamped instant.

“Cartan may be in Ballycormack; who on earth would wait dinner for him? That’s the worst of being a doctor,” he went on, addressing Satterthwaite; “you never have a moment you can call your own, especially a dispensary doctor. Bah! if he got anything of a decent salary even.”

Then dinner was announced, and they adjourned to a back-room on the other side of the hall. The dining-room was a much smaller apartment, and was, if possible, more ugly and squalid than that which they left. The dinner-table and its equipage left much to be desired in point of cleanliness and comfort; elegance or refinement Satterthwaite did not expect. The dinner consisted of meat almost exclusively. A large boiled leg of mutton was the *pièce*

de résistance, and a dish of beefsteaks was at the foot of the table; two dishes of potatoes were the only accompaniment.

Mrs. Perry apologised to her guest for the simplicity of the fare, which was not even well cooked.

Satterthwaite was hungry, and contrived to eat the dinner; he thought to himself that he had never seen such a table in his life. The spoons and forks, of massive silver, were dirty, and black thumb-marks decorated the plates.

"I wonder what the Ferrards have for dinner to-day," said Perry with a laugh, in which his wife and daughters joined. "My ducks, I'll vow."

"Indeed, I don't know that. I'm not at all fond of believing everything Mat says." Mrs. Perry said this in a tone of feeble protest.

"Humph," grunted her lord. "I dare

say there are plenty of thieves besides them—but all the same, I don't know anybody would dare take anything of mine but that Char."

"Well, Hel wouldn't, and Isidor never does anything she dislikes." Miss Perry said this.

"I dare say," said Perry, with a scornful laugh.

Then the ladies left the room. A servant carried in a tray with whiskey and hot water. Perry brewed a tumbler of strong punch, but no entreaties or inducement would make his guest follow his example.

"I never drank punch in my life—never!" he protested. "If you will let me have cold water I will take some grog. I prefer it to the sherry? Yes."

Satterthwaite did indeed think it less dangerous than the brown fiery compound

he had been forced to drink at dinner. He was a judge of wine, and moreover a very moderate drinker. He was astonished at the quantity of punch Perry drank without its taking effect on him. They talked chiefly of farming for about an hour, then his host showing unequivocal signs of drowsiness, Satterthwaite rose, and after some demur, rather faintly pressed by Perry, went into the other room.

Mrs. Perry was nodding in an easy-chair. The eldest girl was playing, but ceased at his appearance, and turned round on the music-stool.

“I wish I were out of this,” thought Satterthwaite ; “however, there is no help for it now.” So he took a chair beside the lady of the house, who in her husband’s absence seemed inclined to be talkative and cheerful ; she no longer drooped her eyelids and stammered as if in the ex-

pectation of being set right every moment.

"I wonder, Mr. Satterthwaite, you came to live here — after London, now, too!" she exclaimed, open-eyed.

"Oh yes. You'll never stop at Rosslyne!" echoed her daughters.

"I like it immensely. I mean to live there always. I like Darraghstown too, ever so much." Satterthwaite said this with malice prepense.

"Augh!" cried Mrs. Perry, "I hate Darraghstown. I wouldn't live a day out of Doblin, if I could help it."

"You don't care for the country, then. I think the views round this place are simply charming."

"Augh!" cried they all in one melodious chorus, "I'd rather have Grafton Street than all the views in Ireland."

"Or the Pier o' Sundays."

“Or the Exhibition Promenades.”

“I don’t know why Mr. Perry likes it so much,” said their mamma plaintively.

“Does he, indeed?” said Satterthwaite, thinking of something the worthy gentleman had said the previous evening. “I fancied he disliked the place too.”

“Augh! don’t mind him now,” said his wife; “if he was out ov it he’d be dyin’ to get back again. Look at him there last summer, when we were up in Kingstown; he couldn’t stop a week in it. He should be back home. No, indeed, Mr. Satterthwaite, Mr. Perry couldn’t live out ov Darraghstown.”

“It’s a horrid place. There’s no society at all,” said the lady on the music-stool, with a plaintive expression of face.

“No society,” said Satterthwaite, turning and looking at her inquisitively. “Are there not a great many families here? I

thought I heard of half a dozen from Mr. Perry."

"There's the Hollohans, of Brophys-town," began Mrs. Perry in a droning voice; "but ah! they're such very plain, old-fashioned people now, though my girls and theirs were at school together at the Sawker Cure Convent. I don't care for them mixing at all, now. An' them Reallys are queer—very queer."

"Who are they, Mrs. Perry?" asked Mr. Satterthwaite, as maliciously as before.

"They live up there in that out-of-the-way-lookin' house on the hill — Buona Vista they call it. She was reared off abroad somewhere with an uncle, a marshal or general, or something, and Really met in with her. She was a governess at Harrogate, I believe, an' he married her. They say she thought he had money, and

he thought she had. I don't know—but I never got on with her. She has an awful temper."

"You know her then, Mrs. Perry?"

"Augh, yes, in a sort of a way; but we don't get on. She has a big telescope up there in their drawing-room window, and I think she'd rather be lookin' through that than anythin' else. She can see all over the town, and knows everybody and everything."

Satterthwaite felt glad he had broached this subject. And he determined to make Madame Really's acquaintance without loss of time.

"She must be a character," thought he. "My friend seems to resent the telescope even more than the temper. I expect I shall have some amusement here yet, unpromising as it does look."

"Then there are the Castle Darragh

Hollohans," said he, intent on working the mine further.

"Stuck-up lot—drive their carriage and pair, with a footman on the box. They're cousins of the Brophystown people, but don't visit them. They called on Mrs. Scanlan of the Bank, but only asked her to tea; they know no one at all. The Newtons and Carringtons won't have them, and we in the town ain't fine enough for them. Mrs. Fair and Miss Fair, we know them now, but they're a long way off, and Tom Fair is—"

Mrs. Perry broke off with a shake of her head, which conveyed to Mr. Satterthwaite the impression that Tom Fair was not a most estimable character.

"As well as I can gather, not two families of the whole place seem to be on terms," thought he. "So far for society;

now let's see what remains." So turning to the eldest girl, he said :

"How are you off for books? You have a library in the town?"

"No," replied she, "there is no library. The nuns have a few religious books and story-books, and they lend them out at a penny a week."

"Why don't you form a book-club, and get down books from Dublin? In England people do that. How do you live without reading?"

"Oh, we don't mind," returned the young lady in a languid careless drawl. "We borrow a book now and again. We don't care for reading."

"Do you know the *London Journal*?" said the youngest, Miss Eily, looking up pertly at him.

"Eily! if you ever bring the *London Journal* from the kitchen again I'll tell

Father Quaide on you," her mamma spoke in peevish scolding tones, "and I won't allow Julia to bring it into this house. You know he doesn't approve of light reading."

Satterthwaite stroked his moustache thoughtfully, and asked Miss Perry to play. He got up and turned over the leaves of her music for her—not a very easy task, so dilapidated and ruinous was their condition. Miss Perry's music was of the most ordinary and most unbearable class—operatic airs with frightful variations. The piano was bad and out of tune to boot; the pedal required the exertion of both her feet to work it, and performed a hideous obbligo of its own. Satterthwaite stood patiently and turned over the leaves for the performer with a gravity that was at times imperilled by the criticisms on his personal appearance which reached his ears distinctly from behind.

He heard the door of the room open and shut as if some one had entered, but he did not turn to look, thinking it might be the master of the house.

At last, at long last, the Fantasia closed with a score of awful crashes. The musician let her hands drop into her lap, and swung round towards the patient Mr. Satterthwaite.

“Thank you,” Miss Perry; “that is really a treat.” He meant the finale. “You must practise immensely.”

“Oh no, Mr. Satterthwaite, I assure you I never touch the piano. I don’t really know when I practised my pieces; ’pon my word I don’t, now.”

Miss Perry repelled the accusation, just as all young lady pianists of her calibre do, with as much warmth as if it conveyed an imputation of a discreditable nature.

“Mr. Satterthwaite,” said Mrs. Perry,

from her easy-chair, "let me present you to the Honourable Miss Ferrard."

Satterthwaite, almost doubting his ears, turned round to find himself, to his still greater surprise, facing a tall young lady dressed in an elegant and well-fitting robe of soft black stuff mingled with silk. She was standing on the hearthrug silent and gloomy-looking, and acknowledged his low bow by an inclination of her head, accompanied by a look from a pair of, what Satterthwaite thought, the most magnificent eyes he had ever seen in his life. There was something of fear in their expression, and recognition too. In the lamp-light, and shaded by the beautiful dark lashes which now drooped over them, they looked almost black. She appeared a little uncomfortable and ill at ease for the moment, but Satterthwaite could not help noticing the difference between her simple

naturalness and the clumsy affectations of the Perrys.

“Sit down, dear,” said Mrs. Perry good-naturedly.

The new-comer seated herself in the vacant arm-chair opposite, and folding her hands in her lap remained demure and silent.

Satterthwaite took up a position beside his hostess, and while conversing with her, managed to reconnoitre the features and lineaments of his new acquaintance, she meantime replying indifferently and in monosyllables to the questions of the other girls who had gathered about her.

What a contrast she presents to them, thought the amused watcher. A low, broad forehead, from which the hair was brushed back smoothly; strongly-marked eyebrows, and long dark eyelashes curling and thick like fur. The eyes were violet-

12 The *Woman* *Miss Ferris*

"No, them," repeated Perry.
"No, no, them. They never think o'
them, no, no, indeed. I think th
about them they don't come in
the place. They never sell the
the whole district was o
well, and the people all know that, a
about thinking for them in conse

"In that's the way, is it?" said
the man. He was stooping
over the wall with a five-rule, though
Perry's words interested him so
much that his measurements, tha
he made them all over again.

"Are you taking the measu
ments?" asked the attorney.

"Yes, and new wainscoting.
want more than that too. I'd b
to Dublin for a man to come
make an estimate. I want pe
pieces of all sorts."

blue, and the nose—he had to wait until she turned her head sideways to determine its order—*retroussé* ever so little. The upper lip short, to a fault, and the strong round chin almost cleft by a dimple; the skin was pale colourless olive.

The Perrys, with their ash-coloured hair, red noses and ears, and straggling loose mouths, and undecided pale eyes, looked washed-out, faded creatures beside her. Satterthwaite smiled as he thought of the carman's not inapt comparison. The feeble attempts of Mrs. Perry to make conversation received but scanty encouragement at his hands.

"This is my poacher," thought he, with an amused smile. "A Diana, indeed. She recognises me, the young gipsy that she is. If I had caught her that time, behind the summer-house; glad I did not."

"Mr. Perry must have his nap. You'll

excuse him, Mr. Satterthwaite. He never wakes up till tea. Eily, darling," continued the matron, "run and see what Julia's at."

"Why didn't you come out for the walk to-day?" Satterthwaite heard the eldest girl say to Miss Ferrard. "You know you promised us, and we walked up and down ever so long waiting for you."

"Isidor wanted me," replied she in a demure low voice, after a pause, looking down shyly as she spoke, but with a faint smile.

"Were ye ever in Louth, Mr. Satterthwaite?" Mrs. Perry went on. "I was thinkin' ye might have made the acquaintance of my first cousin, Hyacinth O'Maloney. He's sub-sheriff of the county this year."

"No," replied he, "I never was in Louth, and don't know the name."

"Ye might have met him at the Castle

in Doblin," she persisted in spite of his disclaimer. "They go to the levees and drawn'rooms regular—all of them do. They've a lovely place, O'Maloney Castle. There's never less than fourteen horses kept up constant, and as for——"

"What did Isidor want you for to-day? Say, fishing?"

"N—no!" answered Miss Ferrard, with a conscious look at Satterthwaite, who had turned his eyes on the fire, and did not look at her again till Mrs. Perry had got to the eight sets of real lace drawing-room curtains at O'Maloney Castle.

"A walk, then?" pursued Miss Perry.

Satterthwaite strained his ears but could not hear the reply, and when he next stole a glance across the hearthrug Miss Ferrard, lost in a reverie, was looking into the fire, and her companion seemed to have aban-

doned her efforts at conversation in utter despair.

Then they all went to tea in the dining-room. The host had awakened, and was standing with his back to the fire, his wiry hair all on end. He nodded with a satirical smile to Miss Ferrard, who either did not see or disregarded the salutation, then yawned aloud.

"You don't nap after dinner, Mr. Satterthwaite, eh?" The "eh" developed into another yawn of most alarming extent. "Driving in the open air always makes me sleepy. I could not do without a snooze after dinner—'tis a most wholesome plan, I'm told."

"I prefer to smoke," said Satterthwaite, who had contrived to place himself opposite Miss Ferrard.

Perry took his own arm-chair at the end of the table, and glancing at Miss Ferrard and

from her to Satterthwaite, winked meaningly. Satterthwaite frowned, and turned away his head. The young lady, however, said nothing, and continued calmly buttering her bread.

“How’s young Devereux’s foot, eh, Miss Hel?” asked he then, with a malicious twinkle in his eye.

“I don’t know,” she replied, looking up quickly, a red flush mantling on both cheeks.

“H’m—I saw you in that neighbourhood to-day; so fancied you might be round inquiring for him.” Then he winked again, and took an enormous bite of the edible on his plate.

“What happened to young Devereux?” asked Satterthwaite, turning to Perry; “and who is he?”

“He’s the son of the man that has Darraghmore now,” answered Mrs. Perry,

“and he hurt his foot a while ago breaking in a young horse, I believe.”

“You never do have the rights of any story, Mrs. P.,” snapped her amiable lord, who had disposed of the mouthful of cake. “He was leading the horse in, and it stepped on his toes. Wasn’t that it, Miss Helena?—you were there. By-the-bye, has he made up his mind about going to Australia, yet?”

“California, pa,” said Miss Perry.

“Well, it’s all one, isn’t it? Do you know, any of ye?”

“California is not in Australia,” said Miss Ferrard, speaking in a decisive tone; “it’s in America.”

“Is it, indeed! Thank you, miss,” returned Perry, with a mock gratitude for the information, which his daughters had not dared to supply.

“We haven’t heard,” returned the young

ladies, who had glanced to each other, and tittered when their guest made her daring assertion.

“ Well, if ye haven’t heard it,” grumbled their parent, “ it’s not known, for I’m blessed if an egg is laid in the barony without your having the first intelligence of it.”

At this compliment they all laughed boisterously, Miss Ferrard excepted—a sneer curled her lip, and she did not raise her eyes again during the meal. After tea, Perry and Mr. Satterthwaite went into the study. The rest returned to the drawing-room.

The study was a small, untidy room, with one window which looked out on the front. Cocoa-matting covered the floor ; one side of the wall was occupied by book-shelves, which in their turn were occupied by a great many things besides books. A large

green-covered table, strewn with books, papers, maps, and all sorts of litter, filled the whole centre of the room. Mr. Perry's saddle and top-boots lay in one corner, and whips, rods, and guns graced the wall. They had seated themselves at the fire to smoke, when a knock at the door caused Perry to jump up.

"That's Cartan, now," said he. "I don't want to be bothered with him here." Then he opened the door, and said to the servant as she passed :

"It's Doctor Cartan—tell him I'm busy, and show him into the drawing-room. He's a decent poor fellow," said he. "'Tis a pity he drinks so."

"A rather serious disqualification that," said Mr. Satterthwaite gravely.

"Ah, in these country towns men have a frightful life of it. I have seen I don't know how many go to the dogs in this

little hole of a place, with drink. The bank-clerks get together of an evening up in the billiard-rooms of the hotel—what else have they to do ? A man has a terrible life in a place like it.”

“ Evidently,” replied Satterthwaite absently. “ Nothing to do but go to the dogs with drink,” he repeated to himself. “ What a state of society ! I declare I don’t wonder at their wanting Home Rule. If I thought it was to put any healthy life into them, I’d go in for it too. The education must be at the bottom of it. Tell me, Mr. Perry,” he continued aloud ; “ how are you off for schools here ? ”

“ There’s the Christian Brothers and the National School, and the nuns have a boarding-school in Ballycormack ; and there’s the National, too, for poor girls, I mean.”

“Have you no better class schools for boys?”

“No; and that’s a terrible loss. We have to send boys off to the Diocesan College; there’s nothing between that and the Christian Brothers, and, for that matter, they’d be better taught by the brothers.”

“No day-schools, then, of that class?”

“None; ah, these National schools are a great humbug. There’s a teacher above there appointed by the parish priest, and he’s no good. He won’t appoint any one trained in the model schools, and so the Christian Brothers easily distance them as teachers. In fact, the National schools are a swindle—just a swindle, of no use on earth but to waste the public money. Wherever they can manage it, the priests get the nuns to take them; and they appoint anybody they choose to the village

male school. If he gets them up to the mark for the inspector, it's enough. They're humbugs."

"That, it seems to me, is the 'priests' fault. Why don't they get proper teachers?"

"No proper teacher would work for the pay; and the position, moreover, is too poor a one. National teachers are just priests' servants and dependents; no one recognises them, or respects them."

"Ergo, neither do their scholars."

"The Government has done more to crush intellectual life here by the spirit in which the system was conceived, than centuries of neglect ever did or could do. I declare to you, Mr. Satterthwaite, if the people can thumb their prayer-books instead of their rosaries at Mass on Sunday, they think they know everything. They're satisfied if they pass the inspector,

and their teacher is precious little better than themselves. Believe me, under the hedge-school system, with its odd scraps of Latin and Greek, they were better off; they had a glimpse, anyhow, that there are fields of knowledge beyond those comprised in the National school-books. And they tried to reach them, ay, and some of them did. Some of our greatest men, sir, got their first taste for knowledge at the hedge-schools; now a National school would just turn them out smart, self-conceited shop-boys. It is a scandal that all higher class education should be impracticable—should be denied. I dare say in this very place, poor as it is, there are forty or fifty boys whose parents could afford to send them to the old intermediate schools now (there may be a genius or two among them), and who are forced to put up with the National school.

There's nothing between it and the Diocesan College, which is inconvenient and costly, and good-for-nothing into the bargain."

"In that case why don't you get a classical master? You could easily find one. You have the remedy in your own hands."

"He'd have to be a Catholic, otherwise it would be impossible; and where would you get a Catholic classical scholar now? And along with that the priests want the Diocesan colleges supported."

"Why, that's absurd, you know; what has the schoolmaster's creed to do with his scholars?"

"Hah, there's the whole trouble, sir; there's mixed education. You see," continued Perry, with a bitter grin, "ignorance is no sin—no hindrance to salvation, whereas a mixed education is most

perilous. There, I'm quoting last Sunday's pastoral."

"No use going into that matter. But tell me, if Government founded intermediary schools with bursaries, and scholarships attached, at the Queen's University, would the people avail themselves more largely of them?"

"I really can't tell you ; it would depend greatly on the priest, and still more on his personal character and influence. It's a curious question ; and the people here are very peculiar. They value nothing that costs them nothing. And if you made them a present of the finest educational scheme in the world, they would neither thank you nor value it. They paid something in the hedge-schools, and something more in the intermediary schools, so they respected them. I assure you it is the same all through ; they don't consider the

dispensary doctor fit to bleed a pig, because he costs them nothing. It's a fact."

"What is the meaning of that?"

"The hate and distrust they have of everything devised by Government for one thing, and I suppose there is at bottom something of independence of spirit for another. God bless me! I recollect poor Mrs. Fitz-Ffoulke, when she was here, getting up a coal-club and clothing fund, and collecting money to treat the poor to blankets and fires when the cold weather set in. Well, she and her committee did manage to make a lot of the old rascals comfortable; and what do you think my wife and daughters heard them say? in fact, it was the generally received belief among them, that Mrs. Fitz-Ffoulke and the others were making *some profit out of the charitable enterprise for themselves*, else

they'd never have gone to all the trouble they did. Haw, haw, haw !”

“That was gratitude, by Jove !”

“Yes, and it was all done in pure charity, no souping swaddling mixture whatever. The Fitz-Ffoulkes had none of that about them.”

“Tell me, Mr. Perry, do you think the Catholic University would succeed if they got the charter ?”

“No. I don't believe they would ever have enough students. The middle class of Catholics is neither large enough nor wealthy enough to support a university, and the better class would continue to send their sons to the aristocratic Trinity, just as they're doing now. The people who are agitating for it are not the people who *could* use it. And those who could don't want to. In fact, nobody believes in it—the priests themselves don't.”

“Well, in that case what is the meaning of this cry for Denominational education? Is it like the Home Rule cry, ‘full of sound and fury, signifying nothing’?”

“It means the downfall of the National system. That must go like the church. It’s a botch from the beginning to the end, neither one thing nor another. We’d better go into the drawing-room if you have finished your cigar.”

Satterthwaite was not sorry to return thither. He felt curious to see more of Miss Ferrard. She was a new experience to him, and her beautiful face and wild troubled eyes as they met his for the first time, seemed somehow constantly before him.

They entered the drawing-room. Mrs. Perry was in her easy-chair, Miss Perry and Doctor Cartan were seated a little apart. He rose and bowed to Satter-

thwaite ; he was a fair-haired, heavy-looking young man of perhaps six and twenty, with a soddened, bloated face. His manner was uncouth and rough, but he did not seem devoid of intelligence. Miss Helena and the other girls were teasing a kitten on the rug, but they left off and seated themselves decorously on their chairs. Perry dropped himself into the easy-chair and drew it nearer to the fire. The girls moved farther off, and Mrs. Perry's nervous manner returned. Miss Ferrard seemed utterly unmoved by his approach, and glanced disdainfully at him sideways. He saw the look, and eyed her for a moment as if he were about to speak, but thought better of it. Timidity evidently formed no part of her character.

“Why didn't you come to dinner, doctor?” said Perry.

"A call, to Ballycormack," replied the M.D., with a sigh.

"Mrs. Doyle, eh?" laughed Perry.

Doctor Cartan nodded with a sulky look.

Satterthwaite did not care to talk to the dispensary doctor, whose appearance had impressed him unfavourably. He was thinking what to say to Miss Ferrard that would entail a longer reply than yes or no. He had not yet heard her speak, and wished to make her do so. At last, in despair, he said, looking directly at her :

"Do you play?"

The Misses Perry glanced at each other maliciously and laughed.

"No," was her curt answer, accompanied by a searching look, as if to see if he was in earnest or in jest.

"Or sing?" went on Satterthwaite desperately. The young ladies telegraphed

still more mocking glances to each other, and looked with a pitying, patronising air at their friend.

She seemed as if she did not hear him, and rose from her seat. She crossed the room, passing by the sofa where Doctor Cartan and Miss Perry were holding a very one-sided conversation over the family album, to the chiffonier, on which lay some numbers of an illustrated weekly; these she began to turn over deliberately.

Mrs. Perry and her daughters exchanged looks expressing reprobation of such flagrant ill-manners. Satterthwaite, who was repenting his boldness, turned in his seat so as to command a view of her profile, which showed to perfection in the window corner against the glowing damask curtain.

"You won't mind her," whispered Mrs. Perry apologetically, "Mr. Satterthwaite. She's such a temper; and then she's never

had any opportunities, the poor child. Such a bringing up, ye know. Left there to run the country, and no one to do any thing for her but a horrid old servant."

"What a pity, is it not?" said he in a sympathising tone. He wanted to hear more.

"Augh, 'tis!" continued Mrs. Perry; "but those Ferrards are all so wild, ye know. She was sent over, when her mamma died, to aunts of hers in England, and she ran off in no time. So I heard. The old nurse told the story herself, so it must be true. She wouldn't learn a lesson or anything; and they'd got a governess into the house and everything for her. Helena nearly killed them all, and made her appearance home here without a thing but what she stood in. So Cawth said. An' her aunts packed everything, clothes and books and all, over to her. 'Twas

very good of them, now ; and, indeed, it's little thanks, I'm afraid, she gives them or anybody. Only a while ago she struck my Eily for something she said to her just for her good—she did indeed.”

“Served her right !” was Mr. Perry's approving comment ; “teach her to give impudence another time. Helena's a trump.”

“Of course, Mr. Perry,” said the lady plaintively, “you always set every one up over your own.”

“She is strikingly ha—er— good-looking girl, don't you think ?” said Satterthwaite, looking at the subject of conversation ; Helena was now standing upright, her tall, straight figure and finely-set head showing to advantage.

“Oh, do you think so, now, Mr. Satterthwaite?” hastily replied Mrs. Perry, with a touch of truly maternal jealousy showing

in her eyes and voice. "I never could fancy that dark skin ; and she has such a displeasing expression. Oh, now, I'm surprised at your taste!" Then she bridled her head, and glanced at her three chicks, as if wondering how any one could prefer Miss Ferrard's dusky beauty to their blonde charms.

"Why, Mr. Satterthwaite," continued she in a loud, impressive tone, "the girl doesn't actually know how to write her name !"

"Yes she does," interrupted Mr. Perry again, and this time more tartly than before. "Yes she does, Mrs. P., and knows a blessed sight more useful accomplishments than any of your precious girls. If I wanted a dinner, I wager Miss Hel wouldn't be a bad warrant for it." And he winked at his guest and laughed long and loud.

Mrs. Perry assumed an air of long-suffering and resignation. Satterthwaite looked at his watch and rose to go.

“Ten o’clock, Mrs. Perry. I must take leave of you—no, thank you, I could not stay longer this evening. If you will allow me, I shall have the pleasure of leaving Miss Ferrard at her own door. I pass it, you know, on my way to the hotel.”

Miss Ferrard looked up in bewilderment and indignation.

“Now, Miss Hel, hold up your head,” laughed the master of the house, standing with his back to the fire. “Do you hear? There’s money bid for you.”

Miss Hel only turned on her heel and went round the table to say good-night to her hostess.

Satterthwaite saw by her looks that she meant to ignore his offer—made, indeed, in pure kindness. He fancied that, as a

mark of attention and respect, the young lady would overlook the imaginary offence of his question a few minutes before. He did not know what to do now, and stood irresolute. Doctor Cartan got up yawning, and said to Satterthwaite :

“ I’ll be down the street with you too, I’m going——”

But his proposition met with such a storm of opposition from the family that he sat obediently down again. Satterthwaite went into the hall to take his hat.

“ You will allow me to see you home then ?” he said to Miss Ferrard, who appeared disinclined to wait longer, and was taking no notice of him.

“ Do you hear ?” added Mrs. Perry in a sharp tone. “ You must not walk home alone. You ought to thank Mr. Satterthwaite.”

By the light of the one candle which

illuminated the entry, Mr. Satterthwaite could see the young lady's eyes flash a gracious look in the direction of her hostess from under a great broad-brimmed hat which she now slouched over her face. She remained still, however, till he opened the hall door, and then they went out together.

It was dry and mild, and the night air seemed heavenly in comparison with that of the stuffy room. Miss Ferrard threw back her hat and drew a deep breath of relief.

"Is it not a lovely night?" said he, looking up. Not a cloud veiled the myriads of stars above. There was no moon, but everything was clear and distinct, and the scent of the wallflowers and primroses under the holly-trees hung heavy in the air. Everything was soft with a drowsy sweetness ; it was like stepping into a new world, the half dark, the silence, save for

the rhythmic murmur of the branches rocked by a little breeze overhead.

"Yes, it is beautiful," she replied.

They walked on a few steps in silence, then suddenly through an opening between the houses came a hoarse, dull murmur.

"That must be the river we hear," said he, halting for an instant.

"It is the river," said she, with something more of animation in her tones than he had yet heard; "it runs behind the houses. It is very full after the rains. Look," she continued, pointing with outstretched hand, "you can see where it goes."

Satterthwaite followed the direction of her hand with his eyes, and could trace the broad lead-coloured band that stretched itself eastward from where they stood, moving on slowly between two high banks

of reeds, the rustle of which was borne to their ears on the breeze.

“Good-night,” said the girl abruptly, stepping down as she spoke through a swinging gate into a flagged walk considerably lower than the footpath. A dog jumped up from under the bushes, and approached her snuffing and wagging his tail.

“Allow me to knock or ring,” said Satterthwaite, making a movement to follow her.

“Don’t come in,” said she imperiously.

The dog, as if divining her wishes, crouched with an ominous growl. There was nothing to be done; he lifted his hat and crossed the road to gain his hotel, feeling thoroughly amused with his adventure; but before he had gone far it struck him that he had not heard the door open

or shut. What could the meaning of that be? and he turned and looked back. Just as he expected; the young lady had not gone into the house. There she was seated, on the parapet of the old bridge, the black silhouette of her figure clearly defined against the sky, and her canine protector seated close beside her. Satterthwaite stood still, perplexed. He should have waited until the hall-door was opened at least; then his responsibility had ended, but he had not fulfilled his duty, and now this impropriety was the consequence. He could not go home and allow her to remain in such a dangerous place. Who could tell what drunken strollers might be about? What if she lost her balance and fell over the parapet? "Bah!" thought he; "I'm a fool! she knows what she's about." Nevertheless, he stepped off the path and down into the soft roadway, and walking

quickly, reached the delinquent unnoticed by her.

She was sitting sideways on the coping-stone leaning on one elbow, and with the other arm wound round her dog's neck. Before Satterthwaite got up to her he could catch above the noise of the river under the arches the sound of some queer old ballad she was crooning in a low voice to herself. The words reached him distinctly :

“Mauriade, ny Kallaght,
This good skene beside me
Had drunk the last drop
Of thy young heart's——”

Satterthwaite laid his hand on her dress before he spoke. Her back was turned to him, and as she was unconscious of his approach, he feared to give her a sudden start.

“Miss Ferrard,” he began in a distant,

reproving tone, "are you not afraid to sit here? I thought I left you at home."

"Well, sir!" she said, breaking off her song and looking up at him defiantly and coldly as if wanting an explanation.

Satterthwaite had expected an excuse, or at least a precipitate retreat on her part. He faltered for a moment. She changed her position to an upright one, and stared at him insolently almost.

"I cannot think of leaving you here at this hour; you do not know who might see you. It is neither safe nor proper," he added severely.

Her lips curled, but what answer she meditated he never knew, for at that moment a side-door in the mill-yard opened and a voice shouted "Hel!" almost simultaneously. An old woman appeared, and made straight for his companion. She clutched the girl by the arm, and dragged

her off her seat and away towards the door, abusing vigorously the while.

“Ye trapesin’ night-walkin’ cutty, come awa’ in this minute, gin I had Clan here, but he’d rug yer heid. Naethin’ wull do ye then but larkin’ this hour of night; I’ll——”

The loud bang of the door and the rattle of the bolts cut off the rest of the discourse. He could hear them crossing the garden and yard, the old woman’s shrill tones alone reached his ears, and he could not distinguish the words. Then another door clapped, and all was still. He stood quietly and listened attentively, but no further sound came from the Mill-house.

He walked across the bridge and looked from the other side of the water at the bleak old building, every window of which was dark.

“She is safe, anyhow,” said he, turning

once more homewards ; “ what a wonderful collection these creatures are ! Miss Hel is something quite out of the common. The house and everything seem to match each other.”

Then as he crossed the road he glanced once more at the front of the house ; in a top window there was a pale light as of a candle. He smiled as he saw it.

“ Safe enough this time. I wonder has she had a whipping ? she looks as if she wanted one.”

Then he, too, went home and to bed.

The Darragh river ran close behind the houses in Comerford Terrace ; so close, indeed, that in course of time it might be expected to eat away the bank next to them in such a way as to endanger their foundations. At one time, so the oldest inhabitants said, a good-sized field had separated the garden, hedges, and walls,

from the water-course, but the swift current had gradually widened the elbow which the stream assumed a quarter of a mile above the Comerford bridge, and which elbow or curve just touched with its centre the end wall of the Mill-house garden. This wall was not high, just high enough, indeed, to admit of a person sitting on it with ease and comfort ; though very close to the bridge, it was not overlooked by the loungers who all day long leaned against the parapet, owing to the fact that the wool-store was between the bridge and the garden, and with its high limestone wall formed a thoroughly efficient screen. Immediately below the garden wall, which was in a very ruinous condition, lay a narrow bank of grass and stones, some three or four feet wide, bordered by rushes and water-weeds, and outside of it ran the river, tawny of colour, swift of current, and

bearing along on its bosom trophies of its conquests in the rocky beds above, by Darraghmore and Ballycormack, in the shape of flecks of foam in which were mixed dead leaves, broken twigs, and atoms of moss torn from the tree stems and the stones. Flocks of grey and white geese crossed and recrossed the river, never troubling themselves to swim ; they launched out confidently on the water, and were borne over by the current, from which at their will they disengaged themselves by a deft stroke or two. The ducks were not so venturesome, and were content to disport themselves in muddy pools by the edge, leaving the deep water to their larger kindred. Right opposite the mill-garden were fields sloping to the water's edge, where the cows came down to drink, and in hot weather stood knee-deep in the splashy ooze, to cool themselves and gather

new energy to withstand their torturers the flies. Altogether the view from the garden of "Milligan's," as the old corner house was called, was not destitute of picturesque charm. It was pleasant enough, from the moss-grown wall, to watch the course of the stream from beneath the dipping branches of the trees at the fork where the Rack met its waters, down under the arches of the old bridge, winding past the cabins whose indented irregular roofs were glowing with every tint of brown and green, grey and crimson, on until it spread out beyond the sedges that lined its banks in a wide silver expanse.

Between five and six, one mild grey evening in April, two figures, one male, the other female, were seated on the wall, one lounging with a book, the other idly throwing bits of mortar and loose pebbles into the stream. Both were silent. The

student seemed engrossed in her book, and the boy equally intent on hitting a bit of dead wood that had got tangled in a tuft of rushes. The monotonous ripple of the water hurrying by was lost sometimes in a sudden burst of cackling from the geese as they straggled homewards. A hoarse voice came occasionally from the bridge, and now and again little impatient yelps from the brown water-dog, who was aggrieved that the stones were not thrown in the water for his amusement.

"Hel!—I say, Hel!" began the boy, dropping a bit of mortar and leaning with both hands on the wall; "what sort of looking fellow is this Satterthwaite that has come to Rosslyne?"

"I don't know," replied the girl, without taking her eyes from her book.

"Don't know," repeated he impatiently, "why, you saw him last night at Perry's.

Was it the fellow who ran after us at Rosslyne yesterday morning? Wake up now and say."

Isidor, who had grown a full inch within the last six months, stretched out a long arm, and laying a hand on the student's shoulder pushed her amicably.

"Dear," said she, drawing back impatiently, and keeping one finger close pressed to the line where she was reading, "how can I tell you what he is like? A big man——"

"Fat, eh?"

"No, not fat, he looks well, a big strong man, and very polite."

And as Miss Hel pronounced this last part of her description, she wrinkled up her pretty nose.

"Polite," repeated Isidor, "humph! Tell us, though, was it he you came home with last night? and what was all that row

with Cawth for, eh? I was in bed or I'd have come down. What was it?"

"Oh, ay, you didn't know," answered Helena. "He walked with me to the door, and when I thought he was gone I went round and sat up on the bridge to try if I'd any chance of seeing the otter, and the fool came back after me. I don't know what he was saying when Cawth ran out like a wild-cat and dragged me in."

"He's just gone out a while ago on Dowling's car, up to Ballycormack, I suppose, and he doesn't look a bad sort either. I wonder what kind of fellow he is, now?"

"Pooh! what's that to us? Look, Isi, before the middle arch there's a fish leaped this instant."

"Ay," returned the boy, his eyes kindling with a sudden interest, and he turned

them in the direction indicated by his sister. "I wish I'd gone out this morning. That Englishman has brought over grand rods—you ought to see them, Hel! gaffs, and nets, and everything. They say he has a permit from Lord Comerford to fish the Rack. Char says he's going to rent the shooting of the demesne, too, next season. He's enormously rich. His father was in trade in England. Old Perry heard all about him—He made piles of money. This fellow was a member of Parliament till the dissolution, and he's come over here to study this country. We'll never have any fun out on Rosslyn side again, I fear."

"No," assented Helena dreamily, her eyes fixed on the far side of the river.

"What do you say to go up to Darraghmore in the morning? Jim Devereux is

all right again, and we'll go through the old house and look at his new colt."

"Yes," replied Helena. "The Perrys wanted me to drive over to Ballyslane, just because that Cartan is to be there. What a fool he is ! I won't go."

Then they were both silent again for a time ; the girl read, and the boy stared moodily at the stream running by the tuft of brambles beneath which the otter was supposed to lurk.

"Hel !" croaked the old woman's voice from a broken window in the house, "come in wi' ye to yer supper. Come in !"

The pair turned round and beheld Cawth's uninviting countenance projected through a broken pane, from the draught of which she shielded the candle in her hand. It was not nearly dark yet, but the sunken ground-floor rooms of the old house were dingy and ill-lighted, and the


old woman's sight was not too good. Helena looked back over the river, folding her arms indifferently, and heedless of the eloquent entreaties of the dog, who, understanding the import of the summons as well as his masters, began to fidget and snuff impatiently. Isidor of course was not going to stir until his sister did, and as long as Cawth remained at the window she chose to seem starkly impassive.

"Did ye hear!" cried the domestic at last, her tone showing clearly that her stock of patience was exhausted.

Not as much as a look did either of her hearers vouchsafe. Then she made a dash at the back door, and they heard it slam to and the rattle of the bolts as the old dame fastened them, in the avowed intention of keeping them out. In less time by far than it takes to tell, Isidor had vaulted over the end wall and run round the house

to the front. Ere Cawth had leisure to divine his movement and frustrate it, he had opened the back door again and called Hel, who picked up her book and sauntered in lazily and triumphant.

They passed the kitchen and went into a front room, low ceilinged and dingy, where the dinner was spread. The furniture was something more civilised than in their Galway lodging. There was a side-board, rickety enough certainly, against the wall, and an old round table stood in the centre of the room. On a hair sofa by the fire, which, though the day was close and mild, was piled high with turf sods, lay the old man, much the same in appearance as when he left Galway, save that his eyes seemed duller and more sunk, and his under lip trembled constantly. He raised himself with an effort, and took his place at the table. Char rose from a corner by



the window, where he was trying to read with his book held close to his eyes, and they all sat down together. The dinner consisted of a leg of mutton and fowls. Plentiful fare, as was usual with the Ferrards while their money lasted. The table was laid in somewhat more orderly fashion ; wine-glasses and tumblers were placed to each, and from Helena's behaviour it was easy to see that the glimpse she had had six months before of civilised life had not been completely forgotten. The old man eat little, and drank quantities of whiskey and water. Char and Isidor disputed, just as Clan and his second brother had done when he was at home. Char was quieter and more lazy of disposition than either of the other boys, and as Helena always took Isidor's part the dissensions were of short duration. The dinner was soon over. Lord Darraghmore

lay down by the fire with his newspaper ; Char collected the fragments and whistled the dogs out to the yard, sparing Mrs. Milligan's fragments of carpet in deference to Helena's suggestion that the dogs could eat more comfortably off the stones, and moreover ran the risk of being choked by the Milligans' shreds and patches that covered the floor.

Isidor was rummaging in an old escritoire in a far corner, and Helena, after a wistful look out of window, sat down in the arm-chair opposite the sofa. Presently the old man filled his pipe and called Isidor over to light it. He obeyed, taking a red glowing crumb of peat and dropping it into the bowl, and then the room was filled in a moment by the strong reek of the tobacco. Helena got up and slid gently out.

It was too soon to go to the kitchen ;

Cawth's supper could scarcely be finished yet, and until that event had taken place she would be no welcome visitor ; so she went up the narrow stairs to her own room on the second story. Isi and Char had each a room to himself, for they were not pinched for space in this old rambling house. Behind the dining-room, and separating it from the kitchen, was a small but warm room, appropriated to the master of the house and his inseparable companion the old wolf-dog. On the other side of the narrow hall was a room originally intended for a drawing-room, but which the young people used as a receptacle for their miscellaneous properties; guns, whips, rods, and lines littered it. Furniture there was none.

Helena's room was very differently munitioned from the pretty chamber she had left at Bath. A huge old four-poster

filled the centre of the room, looking, with its enormous mahogany pillars and thick, dusty curtains, like some great catafalque. It had been bought by the former occupants of the house at a sale held at some old family seat in the county. There was a legend that William of Orange had slept in it, and Mrs. Milligan on getting it home had liberally sprinkled holy water over all the four posts, to rid it of the contamination left by his Protestant Majesty. A mahogany wardrobe held her clothes, and on a table near the window was her dressing-case, which, with the rest of the things purchased for her by her aunts, had been sent over as soon as they discovered her whereabouts. On a shelf over the fireplace were piled her books, all of them bearing traces of use. A looking-glass, cracked and dull-coloured, and an old box, formed the furniture of the room ; in the

projecting gable window, however, there was a seat of some kind, with a shawl disposed cushion-wise upon it. On this the girl threw herself, and leaned with her elbow on the sill to look out. There was a wide view from the little queer opening of the gable window. She could see down the street to the Darraghmore Arms, past the post-office, where the mail car was just starting for the train, surrounded, as usual, by a group of idlers; and by turning her head a little to the left, she could follow the course of the Darragh for a long distance, as it wound among the flat meadows and the snipe-haunted sedges away towards the sea. It looked like a silver ribbon, so still and white, as it wandered on. The meadows had taken a pale bright green, and the lambs were out yet; she could see still their white fleeces against the dark background of the hedges. The

window was open, and the busy twitter of the sparrows in the ivy and the evensong of the thrushes filled the air, as did the strong bitter smell of the young shoots of the holly-trees in the front. A few faint red streaks lingered in the west ; she could see them through the trees that crowned the knoll where Really's cottage was ; and the black network of the naked boughs, with the crows hovering noisily over it, looked picturesque and weird.

Then she could see the new arrival, the all-absorbing sensation of the hour at Darraghstown—the Englishman who had bought Rosslyn—saunter out of the hotel, cigar in mouth, and come down the flagged pathway leading to Comerford Road. “Going to Perry’s, no doubt,” thought Miss Helena. For pure curiosity, she watched his progress. He came nearer and nearer, and at last disappeared under

the hedge. She could not see what way he turned from her own window, so ran into Char's room opposite, and looked up the road. No, the Englishman was nowhere to be seen. Where could he have gone? She slipped downstairs, and passing the lobby window caught a glimpse of his low soft hat and grey coat, as he crossed the bridge, evidently meditating a stroll on the river road on the opposite side.

Cawth, of course, knew all about him; so Hel dived into the kitchen, and found the presiding genius seated in her accustomed place by the fire, knitting in hand. The dishes were washed and put away, the dogs curled up in their respective corners. A few sods glowed on the hearth, and cast a mellow, subdued light on the yellow walls and the ancient painted presses. An old clock, long past its work, stood in one corner, and opposite it was Helena's

rabbit-hutch. It was not a clean, cosy kitchen ; no polished pewter or copper was ranged on the walls, no trim dresser, no flowers, spoke for the taste of its inhabitant. Seen in the daylight, it was a grimy, ill-kept den, admirably characteristic of its owner. But now the soft, warm light of the peats lent a charm to it, and the half-darkness covered charitably the more notable defects.

Cawth's white cap and wrinkled countenance, her red and grey shawl, and the bright gleam of her needles, might have attracted a painter's eye. She glanced up as Helena entered, and, stooping, pulled out from beside her own chair a three-legged stool, which she pushed across the hearth. She evidently bore no malice for the antepandial scene. Occurrences of the sort were no novelty in that house.

“ Why didn't ye go wi' the Perrys out

to Ballycormack?" asked Cawth, looking cunningly across at the girl.

"Pah! It's the dispensary day at the village, and the doctor was to come back that road."

Miss Ferrard's short lip was curled with disdain.

"They're losin' time wi' Cartan," said the old woman, with a grin of derision. "His brother is talkin' to Miss Sweeny of Cork for him; ay, an' she's three thoosan' pound. What a fule he'd be to take that trapesin' lang thing of Perry's; not but she's ower good for him," added Cawth the impartial—"a drucken, stupid cratur, drinkin' all day long."

Helena made no answer. She was in one of her reveries; her elbows on her knees, with her chin resting in both hands.

"She'll be settin' her cap for Satterthwaite, the Englishman; I'll warrant ye

she has cheek enough, an' her fule o' a mother too, that niver has a penny of handlin'.* Perry niver lets her hev one farthin' to spend. Satterthwaite's a rich man. Ah!—terrible rich! A' them English be's rich. Much good may it do them! Really was callin' at the hotel to see him the day, an' Hollohan's fro' the Castle stopped their carriage to lave cards, an' it plaze ye. Hech! they didna come sae gleg to call on huz; gin they hed, Clan wud hev set the dogs on 'em, sich trash! Really, the awd butter-factor—I kent his stall well in t' butter market—an' madam, quare divel that she is. Satterthwaite has sent to Dublin for painters and builders, an' I ken what not, to put Rosslyne in order; and Cassidy is in fine rages wi' him that he's na gotten the job, the auld foosterin' fule. He's to bide wi' Blake at t'

* “Handlin’” signifies the disbursement of moneys.

hotel till Rosslyne's ready for him. A fashous partic'lar deevil he is ; man hae a bawth every mornin' o's life. He'll hae somthin' the matter wi' him, I'm thinkin'. These English are aye raisin' a steer wi' their ways, as if they were niver to die—"

Helena nodded impatiently. She was waiting for a pause in the speech to say something.

"Cawth," she broke in suddenly, "I want to know how to knit. Give me over that stocking, and teach me."

"To knet !" cried Cawth, with a scornful laugh. "Ma word, Hel, you're jokin', seerly. What wad ye be doin' knettin' ?"

"Give it here," said Hel impatiently ; and she took the grey stocking and needles from Cawth's hands—she, indeed, was too surprised to offer any resistance.

As soon as Helena had the implements in her fingers, she found her own impo-

tence. Cawth grinned maliciously as she watched the clumsy efforts of the tyro.

“Hech! that’s it! drap the stitches an’ mek a hole; an’ where’s yer ball? Ay, Hel, ye’ll do it, awm seer.”

Seeing that Helena paid her mocking no attention, she changed her humour and gave her some directions, by which guided, the stiff, unused fingers found their proper places, and Helena, to her own delight, was able to make two or three stitches. She knit her brows and frowned, holding the needles as though they were iron bars; but determination won the day, and she mastered the first steps in a few minutes. Cawth went on talking while watching her.

“Blake sez he has got the fishin’ of the river fro’ Lord Comerford, an’ he’s to put men to watch it; an’ there’s not an otter but he’ll root out. He disna’ believe it’s otters takes the fish a’, an’ he’ll hev every

one caught up to the assizes, an' get the full penalty o' the law. Catch up that loop, Hel."

Hel's eyes lighted up with a strange gleam, and she half rose from her sitting posture, letting the knitting drop to the floor.

"Up to the assizes, Cawth! Oh! where's Char? Does he know?"

"He's awa' up at the billiard-room, I suppose; but he's goin' oot ta fish the night. He was sharpenin' the spear there afore denner. I hearn him tell Dirty Davy to be round in time. He winna listen to ye, Hel."

Cawth spoke with a keen relish of the ill-news she was relating.

Hel made no reply; she remained sitting still, and, to all appearance, calmly; but her heart was beating fast with terror and perplexity. She did not need Cawth's

asseveration to tell her that Char would heed no warnings of hers. Isidor would stay at home—he always did whatever she wished; but opposition of any kind only intensified the sullen obstinacy of the other lad. And Satterthwaite had rented the fishing, and set men to watch it! “He looked like one who would keep his word too,” thought Helena, with a dreary sigh, as the image of the Englishman’s florid handsome face, with the well-cut mouth and clear blue eyes, rose to her recollection. She seemed to hear the clear, quick sound of his voice, which alone seemed to express an activity and decision that contrasted strangely with the current tone of Darraghstown society. She felt sure Char would be caught; and if they caught him, he might use his knife. In a rage, Char stopped at nothing; and then—then who could tell what might happen?

Just then a tap was heard at the kitchen door : it opened gently and the figure of a man presented itself at the open kitchen-door. He noticed Helena's presence, and, as he entered, took off his old rabbit's-skin cap respectfully and stood well back in the shadow, his keen, bright blue eyes fixed inquiringly on Cawth.

Dirty Davy was one of the hangers-on to be found in every country town of Ireland—idle, dissipated, and good-for-nothing creatures—half clad and fed, and ready for any odd job that promises the minimum of work with the maximum of excitement in any shape or form. This particular specimen had attached himself to the Ferrards immediately on their arrival ; and, as their new mode of living entailed some additional labour, Cawth was glad to have the aid of a “boy” to fetch and carry for her. Clan and Char found

Davy of use in their nightly expeditions, whether to the river or the demesne. He was not one whit more trustworthy than his fellow-servant in the kitchen ; but the Ferrards, with characteristic recklessness, never new or cared how much or how little he told. This much we may be sure of, that every rabbit or hare bagged by Isidor and Helena became a score at least, and every trout Char took was magnified into a salmon ; while, as for pheasants, Comerford Park never held the numbers alleged by Dirty Davy to be consumed in the Ferrard mansion. Cawth and he used to spend the greater part of the day sitting over the fire together, communing of the iniquities of their masters and the like kindred topics.

Helena, who seemed disturbed and anxious now, got up from her stool by the fire after a short time and went in search

of Char. Neither he nor Isidor were to be found. She went into the parlour; her father had retired to his bedroom, and the wolf-dog was stretched before the embers in the grate. She put some fresh sods on, from the heap that lay ready piled in a corner, and sat down to read until the return of the boys.

“Paul Clifford” kept her entranced for an hour or two. It was nearly eleven when the two lads came in. Char had lost some bets, and was more sulky than usual. He snatched the candle from beside Helena and proceeded to search the corners of the room for some of his missing gear. This found, he struggled into a pair of waterproof boots that reached to his waist. She sat patient as he fastened the straps that held them in their position with sundry grunts. Then he took a couple of spears, and held them in the light, examin-

ing them closely to see the condition of the points. Dirty Davy was fixing a lantern, by the glare of which the fish were to be attracted to the corner where the poachers, with their sharp spears poised, were in readiness to transfix their prey.

Helena sat brooding, watching the preparations. At last, as Char turned to leave the room, she rose with a movement so sudden and abrupt, letting the book fall on the floor unheeded, that Char and his attendant both looked round in surprise.

"Do you know," she spoke in a warning tone, "that Satterthwaite has set men to watch, and if any one's caught he will have them up—yes, up to the assizes?"

"It's a lie!" grunted Char defiantly. "Davy, come on with that lantern; have you no more candle than that bit?"

"It's not a lie!" put in Isidor, who was leaning against the mantelpiece kicking the

pieces of turf about. "I heard it too; it's watched for three miles above the bridge."

"Who cares, then?" retorted Char. "Come down the garden till I get over the wall. Davy, mind the light, and give me that box of matches."

Then, taking his spears under his arm, Char led the way through the passage and out the back door to the strip of waste at the back; picking his way cautiously among the cabbage-stumps and refuse which strewn the ground, he soon reached the low wall. Then he gave the spear to Isidor to hold, and scrambled noiselessly over. The moon was veiled by a little flying cloud for a moment, and a chill breeze swept the river in tiny murmuring ripples. There was no one on the bridge or on the road opposite, and the cabin windows were all dark. Not a sound was there to be heard, save the rustle of the water-flags

and the swirl of the eddies round the arches of the bridge. Dirty Davy, burdened with the lantern, jumped noiselessly on the damp grass : his bare feet awoke no echoes. Char snatched his spear down from his brother's hand and turned off without further parley, taking great clumsy strides in his fishing-boots, and splashing among the weed-grown pools by the edge.

Helena had stolen down to the wall and stood leaning on it, watching the departure of the poachers with a gloomy countenance. Suddenly, as if impelled by some uncontrollable impulse, she stooped forward and called after the retreating figure :

“Char ! Char !—I say.”

He turned round and strode back, sullen impatience in every move of his loose limbs. Helena seemed almost afraid as she saw him coming towards her. She

repented her audacity and moved back a little and hesitated.

“What?” growled he in a fierce, impatient undertone.

“Oh, Char, will you mind the keepers? Satterthwaite——”

But Helena was not allowed to finish the sentence. Char muttered a curse on her folly, and, flinging down his spear, set to scramble up the wall, vowing vengeance on her for making a fool of and delaying him. Isi seized Helena by the arm and hurried her off to the house, into which they bolted themselves securely, and the irate Char, baffled, picked up his spear and betook himself after Dirty Davy, who, hugging the lantern under his tattered coat, was stealing along under Perry's garden walls.

They kept their way in silence by the waterside, past the balustraded wall of the

parish priest's pleasure-ground. Clematis branches just beginning to bud hung down nearly to the water-edge, and the smell of the March violets filled the damp night air. Char stepped cautiously among the stones. Then they came to an open piece which had to be crossed before reaching the upper bridge, where the Rack parted company from the Darragh, and swept away to the left into Comerford demesne. This was perilous ground, for any straggler or belated country man might easily see them crossing, and their appearance at that hour would certainly be looked on with suspicion. It was a dangerous time, for the new-comer Satterthwaite had offered a reward for information.

They halted under the corner of the garden wall and held counsel for a moment. Then Davy, handing the lantern to Char,

crouched by the end wall and advanced stealthily till he gained the edge of the footpath. Then he stooped forward his head and looked, cautiously and long, up and down. There was no one stirring, and the long reach of high-road looked white and ghostly. So he crept back to report matters to his master, and taking up the lantern again, they both stole cautiously and quickly to the desired shelter of the bridge. Here there was a dam to be crossed, no easy feat in the darkness, and with the consciousness that on one side lay a steep rocky incline, down which the overflow rushed noisily, and on the other a dark silent pool, concerning whose depth awful legends were in circulation ; this was overshadowed by a couple of ash trees, whose dry knotted branches clanked eerily in the breeze. Clan stepped on the edge of the dam, and drawing a long

breath, braced himself, and in a couple of well-balanced strides reached the opposite bank. His companion preferred to grope his way on the incline beneath, and scrambled from one high stone to the other with difficulty. This feat accomplished, they had crossed the river, and the way lay now along the channel of the Rack; Char went first, stumbling in the darkness over the rocks overgrown with wet moss, now and again stepping into deep holes, and splashing up mud and water at every stride. At last he quitted the waterside for the shelter of a high hedge, rounded a copse of larch and firs, cautiously, for he dreaded an ambush, and at last, having put two good miles between him and the village, commenced his operations. He had not yet got over his ill-humour, and blundered viciously, and at great expense of shoe-leather, over the stones that obstructed

the path, cursing them liberally as he did so.

Dirty Davy, with that keen sense peculiar to the lower animals and to inferiors, fully appreciating his master's humour, kept at a respectful distance ; he was painfully conscious, by experience, of the Ferrard temper, which, was indeed, far more munificent and prompt of blows than words, so slunk along behind his master, stooping almost double to find the path, and avoid, for the sake of his bare feet, the rough boulders that strewed the way.

Char halted first, and looked round angrily for his follower.

“Curse you ! you slieveen, come here with that light.”

Davy stumbled up, holding out the lantern and gasping energetically. Char snatched it roughly.

“Go on now, go on up there to that bend and watch. See!” he whispered, “look into the plantation. I think I feel the smell of a pipe.” Then he plunged into the water knee-deep, holding the lantern in one hand, and in the other the spear poised in readiness to his shoulder.

Davy quickly scrambled up the bank, and down the other side into a field. Once out of sight and sound of his master, his behaviour seemed rather unaccountable. First he threw himself full length on the grass, and remained thus prone for a breathing-while; then he got up, and shook his head, and stamped on the ground, letting off the while a voluble monologue of curses deep and earnest. Again he lay down in an easy posture, and again after a short interval rose. Having relieved his mind by these exercises, he shuffled off

towards the fir plantation indicated by Char.

How he employed himself there for the space of a full hour, must remain a mystery for ever; but at the end of that time he groped his way back to where Char had taken up his position on the edge of a pool, famed among the fishers, legal and other, of Darraghmore as a haunt of the salmon. One fine seven-pounder lay gleaming on the bank, the wound fresh bleeding in its neck showing where the spear had passed.

“Whew!” said Davy in an exulting whisper, passing his finger through the gill and lifting the prize to feel the weight. Then he cut a switch from a pollard willow near at hand, peeled it carefully, and ran it through the fish’s head, artistically. Char, in somewhat better humour, looked on half-approvingly.

He was kneeling now on the extreme edge of a flat rock, which, covered with about half a foot of water, projected over the deep pool. Leaning forward as much as he dared, he searched with keen and skilled eyes, in the circle of water lighted by the torch, for the infatuated victims lured by the glare from the dark recesses of the pool. Davy lay on the bank shivering, for the night was cold, and hoping that the sportsman would be contented when he had taken the second fish. Suddenly Char made a deft move back. His right hand rose to the level of his shoulder, remained poised a second, then a swift downward dart! The sharp point of the steel flashed a second; the next, a smothered cry, a loud splash! Char had overbalanced himself and fallen into Morty's Hole. The lantern rolled off with a crash and sunk too.

“Mother iv marcies !” shrieked Davy, exuberant always of emotion, flinging himself down to the rock.

But in a moment Char, a practised swimmer, sprang on to it again, spluttering wrathfully at his heedless follower, whose ill-considered outburst might have brought the watchers upon them.

“Whisht! whisht!” suddenly cried Davy.
“Oh, begob, Char ! I hear them.”

Char held out his hand, and both paused a second in breathless attention. Sure enough, they could hear regular and stealthy footsteps approach. Char grasped an overhanging branch, and was across the dyke in an instant. Davy made a rush for the salmon lying behind them, and was just in time to see, as he grasped it, the head of a keeper on the other side of the bank. With a yell of real or simulated terror he dashed down the stream. Char

was half a field off already. The watcher leisurely looked after his flying figure.

"Musha! man; betther you wor in your bed, Mr. Ferrard, anyhow. 'Tis tin shillin's to me!" he muttered.

Then he looked about to see if the fugitives had forgotten anything. He could find nothing. The lantern was at the bottom of Morty's Hole, where it furnished food for much wonder and speculation to the denizens, finned and other, of that usually peaceful retreat. Two days after a large salmon with a spear sticking in its back floated up, and was taken at the weir a half mile ahead.

Satterthwaite was seated at his breakfast the fifth morning after his arrival in Darraghstown, when the landlord entered, walking in a shuffling, hesitating way, and with an expression of mingled doubtfulness and cunning in his face.

"Beg pardon, sir. Thady Conlon's without, wanting to speak to you."

"Thady Conlon!" repeated Satterthwaite, laying down a letter he was engaged in reading. "Conlon! who's that, eh?"

"One of Lord Comerford's men, sir. About the salmon fishery he wants to see you."

"Send him in," said he quickly. He divined from the early appearance of this messenger and the significant expression of Blake's face that something or another had occurred.

A tall, strongly-built fellow presented himself at the door in obedience to Satterthwaite's orders, and stood awkwardly shifting from one foot to the other, and looking anywhere but in the direction of his eyes.

"Well, Conlon, what is this?"

"Watchin' the fishin' last night, yer honor, an'—an'—"

"You caught some of the poachers, say, did you?"

"Seen him, anyhow, your honour; but he got off."

"Got off as a matter of course," added he to himself. "Well," he went on aloud, "you saw him. Could you swear to him now?"

"Augh, bedad!" and here the keeper permitted himself a broad grin. "That 'ud be aisy enough, yer honour. Sure them Ferrards."

"Oh, ho! to be sure, Ferrards. Well, there's your half-sovereign. You can go."

The keeper, whose state of *malaise* seemed to vanish as soon as he got the piece of gold into his fingers, took himself off with profuse thanks, his rubicund visage lighted up by a broad grin. His employer rose, and walked up and down the room in a fever of perplexity.

"This is a defiance!" said he to himself; "a defiance—nothing less! Am I to prosecute the young rogue or not? An ungracious task, certainly; and considering everything, one likely to breed ill-will. There is the example to be considered. Example, indeed! If I put him in the Bridewell, that gipsy sister of his is capable of executing a *vendetta* upon me with her own fair hands. It's a pretty mess! I must only wink at it, I suppose. The only way out of the dilemma will be to make friends of the delinquents, and give them the run of the river. How am I to manage this, either? Miss Ferrard did not seem particularly amicably disposed the other night. If I cannot contrive it gracefully, it would be better to leave it alone. These Irish devils! what a hornets' nest I have discovered!"

He was standing now by the window

looking into the street, when there suddenly passed, walking in the middle of the roadway, the tall, slender figure of Miss Ferrard herself, dressed in black, and with the same broad-leaved hat slouched over her eyes. She looked neither to the right nor left, but held on her way by the high-road that led out past the chapel. He looked after her wonderingly. "If I could meet her," thought he, "get into conversation with her, I could——"

He was about to seize his hat which lay on a side-table, when the thought flashed upon him that if the idlers in the street were to see him accost the young girl in that manner—nay, more, running after her thus, their curiosity and comments would be excited—country towns are all alike. So he laid down the hat unwillingly, and returning to the window looked after her again. Far away up the road he could still see the

tall, dark figure moving along with firm, elastic steps. "How she gets over the ground!" thought he; "I shouldn't mind having her for a companion on a long walk." A bend in the road now hid her from his view. "I wonder what her eyes are like in daylight!" Then he remembered some business at Perry's, and started off to catch the lawyer before he set off for the day.

It was nearly eleven o'clock, and someone was in the study with the attorney; so Satterthwaite, to his extreme annoyance, was forced to go into the drawing-room to wait for him. Here he found Mrs. Perry and her two eldest daughters sitting near the fire. They were all in morning costumes. Miss Perry wore an outdoor coat buttoned up tight to her chin, and her fringe of hair had disappeared into a number of tiny curl-papers. They took his unexpected appearance with an absence of *gêne* which did

honour to their sincerity, if it was slightly unflattering to him.

"Good - morning, Mr. Satterthwaite," said Mrs. Perry ; "please excuse us, 'tis so early—we're not dressed yet. Mr. Perry's in the office with Jim Devereux—in one minute he'll be disengaged."

"I am fortunate to find him at home," said Satterthwaite. "I was afraid he would have gone to Ballycormack."

"No," replied the wife with a genuine sigh ; "he'll be at home all day, so far as I know. Girls, did any of ye hear Mat ordered to get the gig?"

They replied in the negative. He was amused to see the depressed expression of their faces. Plainly the absence of Perry *père* was a desideratum with his family. In a few minutes the study and outer door banged. And then the lawyer's coarse voice was heard shouting :

“Julia—I say, Julia—damn ye!” roared he, “will ye answer me?”

Miss Eily slipped off her seat, after an instant’s delay, to see whether the servant was disposed to obey her father’s summons or not, and ran out.

“Who was that at the door, an’ why the devil was not the name and message sent in to me [at once, you good-for-nothing imp?”

“He said he’d wait till you were done,” whined Miss Eily. “Tis Mr. Satterthwaite, an’ he’s in there.”

The lawyer made no reply, but banged into his office, perhaps to recover his equanimity before presenting himself before Mr. Satterthwaite. The ladies exchanged meaning looks.

“Devereux, wasn’t it?” said Mrs. Perry tremulously, and blinking her weak eyes. “It’s trespassers again, I suppose.”

Satterthwaite regretted sincerely that he had not had the presence of mind to insist on waiting for Perry on the pavement without. The lady of the house moved uneasily in her chair, and looked uncomfortable and nervous. The girls were the same, but responded to his efforts to talk. He was sorry to have caused, however innocently, this domestic annoyance, and resolved, if possible, never to enter the house again. Perry seemed a perfect Turk, though, indeed, these jelly fishes needed something of a powerful stimulus to keep them going.

Their amiable lord and sire marched in presently, high-coloured and sonorous as ever; all traces of the disagreement had vanished.

"Come into the office," said he, leading the way without further ceremony.

Satterthwaite's business did not take

long : when it was over he rose to go, but, as if moved by a sudden thought, said :

“ Did you hear that one of the Ferrards was seen last night spearing salmon in Comerford, on my fishing ? What am I to do ? It’s rather an unpleasant position to be in.”

Satterthwaite had already made up his mind what to do, but he now took it into his head to ask Perry’s advice, so that if his leniency came to be spoken of in Daraghstown, as he expected it to be, Perry, at least, would be on his side.

“ I don’t exactly like to—punish—” he said hesitatingly, and looking directly at the lawyer.

“ I certainly would not advise you to do anything of the kind. I heard all about it. He ran off in one direction, and his factotum, Dirty Davy, grabbed the fish and made off in another—haw ! haw ! I think

you'd best make friends with the young villains. "You see"—this in an impressive tone—"the public feeling of the place is on their side; and yet, I swear, they are as bad as a gang of gipsies. In the same way, everything is laid on them. However, it can't last long now. Bruton was in there seeing the old man about a month ago. He had a slight attack of paralysis; but he says his life is not worth a day's purchase, and then the brood must scatter, for they'll have nothing at all when he drops. Oh no! I wouldn't make bad blood, if I were you, at all. 'Tisn't worth while; and then, when you recollect who they are—the original lords of the soil—eh? and that sort of thing."

Satterthwaite nearly exploded with laughter at the tone in which Perry pronounced the latter part of his opinion, and the contemptuous expression of his face,

as if he deemed it an impertinence on the part of one who merely owned the fishing to interfere with the *menus plaisirs* of these native nobles. His holding the public opinion of Darraghstown as a sort of threat over his head was also an amusing notion. However, he nodded gravely and replied :

“ You are right, Mr. Perry, no doubt. The best thing I can do is to make the *amende honorable* for disturbing these young gentlemen last night. I shall make them free of the fishing, and invite them to join me. I am going out to Rosslyne now, and mean to go across to Darraghmore and have a look at the old place.”

“ Ay, Jim Devereux was here a minute ago. He drove off straight out. You’ll find him there, and he will show you all over it. He lives in part of it himself. Remember to look at his colt. May I offer you the gig ? I’m not wanting it.”

Satterthwaite declined the gig; he had already ordered a vehicle at the hotel, and returned thither to see if it was ready. Half an hour's time saw him mounted on a large, heavy outside car, drawn by a fat, clumsy old mare, that no urging could get beyond a deliberate half-trot. It was a lovely spring morning, and the air was fragrant with the breath of the spring flowers, the ditches shone with pale primrose-stars, the thorn was covered as with a fleece of snowy blossoms, and the soft circinate fronds of the ferns were pushing their way from beneath the blackened, dry leaves of last year. Tufts of yellow daffodils broke the monotony of the level stretches of pasture, and the river, swelled by the rains, tore along foaming to the brim of its bed. The lambs were trying their young limbs in the meadows, and the birds sang from every bough and hedge. The distant mountains were over-

hung with clouds, and their outline seemed strangely distinct and clear. The buds were swelling, and a pale-green tinge seemed to grow everywhere one looked.

Satterthwaite found a pleasure in contemplating the wild landscape, naturally rich, and struggling against neglect, sending out its waste strength in a lush, rank growth of grass and weeds. From the brambles that lined the roadway sprang long white suckers, and the tangled hedges seemed as if the chance nibblings of goats, and cows of perverse tastes, alone checked their exuberance. He passed a farm-steading here and there; the rain-washed walls and hideous air of neglect struck him with a painful sense of the contrast between them and the trim garden-embowered buildings of his native shire. Not a flower had he seen in all Darraghstown. Then he remembered Perry's opinion as to gardens and such

accessories to country life, and laughed heartily.

“ They require an example. The whole thing lies in imitation. They have no one to whom to look up to in these matters, in fact to set the fashion. Those girls of his, in the same way, they want some one to keep them alive. What a life they have ! They don’t read, don’t walk !—what can they employ their time with all day ?”

He reached Rosslyne, and put up his horse and car in time to escape a shower of rain. A body of workmen had come down from Dublin a few days before, and the work was progressing fast. The foreman undertook that in a fortnight the house would be inhabitable. The gardener from Comerford, with a batch of assistants, was working at the pleasure-ground and the fruit-garden at the back of the house, and Satterthwaite found ample employment for the next couple

of hours overlooking and giving directions to his employés. Between three and four he remembered his intended visit to Daraghmore, and ordering round the side-car once more drove off. As he rounded the approach he turned his head, and with a look of real pleasure in his face surveyed his new residence. Rosslyne looked charming, against the background of blue sky and sunshine, the dark grey limestone looked larger and more imposing. The wood was alive with birds. The jackdaws, dispossessed, were holding a court of appeal in the pine trees, whose dark green fingers pointed inexorably upwards. The thrushes almost drowned their hoarse clamour with the sweetest music, and the woodquests' cooing formed a melodious bass. At intervals he could hear the click click of a mason's trowel, and the voices of the workmen in the grounds behind. There was a soft damp

wind blowing, and the smell of the spring was heavy in it. Half reluctantly, and promising himself to come earlier the next day, he drove out of the entrance gates, which he had to open for himself, into the long neglected breen and down a gentle slope till the Ballycormack Road, broad and wide, lay before him; then homewards for a mile, until the Brophystown Road, on which was the entrance of Darraghmore, opened on his left hand; he turned the horse then, and drove on for a mile till a wide gap and a great wooden-barred gate presented itself at the right-hand side.

“ This must be the place,” said he, looking at it. On the other side of the gate was a cart-track through the grass, and a heap of grass and nettle-grown rubbish showed where a lodge had once been. Half of an old pier still stood at one side; all available stones had long ago been carted

away. He got down again and opened the gate for his conveyance, then having carefully shut it, mounted again and drove on, following the cart-track. He passed innumerable tree-stumps, marking where had once been a double avenue of trees. Here and there a stray shrub, such as a laurel, whose taste had defied the cows, and the broken remains of a fence, indicated a plantation.

After twenty or thirty minutes he reached the lawn, and drove straight up to the hall door-steps. These, of solid granite, had defied the neglect and illusage which was so plainly visible everywhere else, but the balustrade was broken off and lay a ruin among the weeds at the side. The hall door was shut, and had evidently not been open for a long time, for the grass was growing in the chinks at the jambs ; overhead was a square slab of marble, on

which was carved what had once been a bird. The head and wings were gone, and of the motto only a couple of broken letters remained. Satterthwaite could not decipher them. The windows were exactly in the condition described by the driver of the mail-cart, without a whole pane of glass in them. A monthly rose had climbed up to the second story, and in an empty casement there. Nor was it the only out-of-door visitor. The swallows darted in and out undisturbed, and there seemed to be a whole rookery among the chimney-pots.

Satterthwaite looked round, and up and down in vain for a trace of human habitation, and marvelled much where young Devereux had his quarters. At last he caught sight of a woman's head peering curiously round the corner of the great rambling old building ; he left his car and walked in her direction. On turning the corner he

passed, before reaching the door at which she stood, two windows filled with geranium pots. He obeyed the directions she gave at his request, and after walking across a filthy farmyard, opened a door in the gate and stepped through into the paddock.

“By Jupiter!” said Mr. Satterthwaite to himself, when a full view of the scene lay before him. There were the Ferrards, Miss Helena and her younger brother, assisting Devereux in the breaking-in process now going on. A splendid young bay colt was trotting round the trio, shaking his head and tugging at the long rope by which his owner held him. On seeing the stranger, Devereux, who was in his shirt-sleeves, pulled up the horse, and giving him in charge to young Ferrard, advanced to meet him.

Satterthwaite thought he had never seen a handsomer lad: he was tall and

slight, but had broad shoulders, from which rose a round, short neck, white under the rim of sunburn, below which the crushed collar and careless cravat had slipped. An old felt hat, tossed far back on his head, allowed a broad smooth forehead to be seen, above which a crop of little fair curls clustered; wholesome red cheeks, well-cut features, and fine open blue eyes, which met the Englishman's with a glance as honest and frank as his own.

"As handsome a fellow as ever I met," thought he, and he raised his hat. Devereux did the same.

"My neighbour, Mr. Devereux?" asked Mr. Satterthwaite.

"Yes. You are Mr. Satterthwaite from Rosslyne? I am glad to see you, sir." It was not with the tone of an equal that the young fellow replied to the greeting of the new-comer, but there was nothing whatever of servility in his voice or manner.

Helena's first impulse, on seeing the owner of Rosslyne enter the field so unexpectedly, had been to run off; but she quickly acknowledged to herself the futility of that proceeding, and drawing closer to Isidor, stood still, her eyes fixed in expectation and terror on Satterthwaite's face; she felt certain he had come there to look for Char—to punish him—perhaps to take him prisoner.

“These English are so particular and strict,” thought poor Hel.

Isi held the colt's head with both hands; his dark eyes fixed on his sister's face, ready for her commands, whatever they might be. He, too, was frightened, but was far more ready to fight than run away. However, this suspense did not last long. His short greeting of young Devereux over, the Englishman stepped forward to her, and with a pleasant look held out his hand.

Hel, trembling all over from the sudden reaction, placed hers in it with a smile of relief.

Satterthwaite, who was only too glad to find his overtures of peace so well received, and who, noting her dark troubled expression on seeing him, had anticipated a different reception, shook hands heartily enough; then turned to Isi, who, puzzled and at fault, was looking at her for his cue.

"This is your brother, of course?"

"Yes. My brother Isidor—Mr. Satterthwaite."

Without a word Isidor took off his hat, his back all the time turned to the stranger; then he began to lead the colt away up the field.

Satterthwaite turned to the farmer.

"I came, Mr. Devereux, to ask your permission to go through the house. You occupy a portion of it, I believe?"

"Ay, to be sure you can; but, indeed, I

don't know what you'll see. Is the stairs safe, Hel? You were up them last."

"Hel!" repeated Satterthwaite to himself, surprised and amused, a little shocked too to find Miss Ferrard and this good-looking young horse-breaker on such intimate terms.

"Safe enough," she answered shortly. "Jim, are you going to let us see you leap him to-day?—do."

Another revelation! Satterthwaite was again astonished, and then laughed at himself for being so. Miss Ferrard was leisurely walking down the field after her brother. He looked after her admiringly; her dark beauty seemed absolutely radiant, and the blonde face of Devereux acted as a foil that intensified the deep rich hues of her southern charms.

"What do you think of my colt, sir?" asked the farmer.

"A splendid youngster. How old?"

"Rising two. I am breaking him for Ballinasloe next autumn. A good jumping horse is always worth his money there; I got ninety for a beast not as good as him last year. He was my father's, though, and Freney's mine." His eyes followed the movements of the horse with a glow of pride in them. "Come up here with him, Isi," he shouted.

Young Ferrard led up the horse, and Satterthwaite examined its points closely. His opinion was thoroughly favourable as to the animal's merits, and was given in a hearty outspoken way that evidently won the favour of its owner.

"Come in now, sir, and we can go through the place."

"Do you ride, Miss Ferrard?" said Satterthwaite to that young lady, who was walking beside him. Devereux was in

front, carrying his coat on his arm ; Isidor brought up the rear with Freney.

She turned round and laughed to her brother before answering.

“ Whenever I get the chance ; that’s not often.”

“ Miss Perry rides, I believe,” said Satterthwaite. He spoke in a tone which he purposely tried to render as unconcerned and unrestrained as possible, without being in the least condescending or free.

“ Yes,” she answered, with a perceptible contempt in her voice ; “ an old garron. I’d as soon ride a chair.”

“ An old battey,” grunted Isidor from behind. “ Perry’s always trying to sell it. He wanted Cartan to buy it.”

Then these two young people, who seemed to be unusually cheerful and expansive, laughed merrily. Satterthwaite was puzzled what to make of them. For

a moment the thought came into his head that they were defying him, and he stole a quick glance at Helena's face. Her lips were trembling; and though she laughed, her eyes had the softened light of tears in them. He felt sorry to the heart for her, and admired her spirit at the same time. "Evidently," thought he, "this couple are not responsible for Master Char, the elder brother, and he seems to be a thorough-going young scamp, from all accounts. Poor girl! what an extraordinary, impossible position for her!"

He walked back with them into the stable-yard, and waited till Devereux had put up the colt again in his stall, then they went into the house. Devereux, who had put on his coat, led the way into a good-sized room on the ground-floor. This was whitewashed and earthen-floored like the common farmhouse kitchens; a fire was

burning on the hearthstone, and a pot swinging from a chain hung over it; a dresser well laden with crockery-ware, plain deal chairs and tables, and a huge old clock composed the furniture of the place.

The servant-woman produced a loaf and butter from a cupboard in the wall, then she went into an adjoining room and returned with a jug of new milk. Her young master took out a key, and unlocking a private store, brought forth a jar of whiskey, which he proceeded to fill into the blown-glass tumblers. Satterthwaite, who was amused at the idea of drinking nearly a tumbler of potheen, entered a protest, and was desired by his host to help himself. He pushed, as he spoke, one of the glass tumblers in the direction of the boy Ferrard. Miss Helena had filled herself a glass of milk unaided

by Devereux, who had seized the loaf, and was cutting it in immense slices.

"I've nothing better to offer you; we ate the last of the ham yesterday. Take a bit, Hel," said he, holding out a great piece to her on the point of his knife.

"What's that you're doing, sir? Oh, come now," said he, catching sight of the tumbler of milk Satterthwaite had filled out, "you mustn't turn your back on Home Rule that way. Take a little more into that," and he pushed the great jar hospitably in his guest's direction.

"Home Rule!" repeated Satterthwaite; "what does that mean?"

"Eh!" replied he; "we never drink a drop of the cratur here, now, without drinking success to the cause, so we have got into the way of calling it by that name."

"I won't drink that toast, Mr. Devereux; you must excuse me." His host

showed a brilliant set of teeth with a good-humoured smile.

“We’ll make you drink it yet, Mr. Satterthwaite,” he said, “before we’ve done with you—eh, Hel?”

But Miss Hel had left her seat, and was amusing herself with the caged linnet in the window. Her brother looked up with a scornful curl of his lip, and muttered something, of which only one word—“humbug”—was said distinctly enough to reach their ears.

“Was this the kitchen of the old house?” Satterthwaite asked, looking round at the curiously vaulted ceiling and solid walls, in which iron doors, like those of some cooking apparatus, were inserted at intervals.

“No,” replied Devereux; “this was the steward’s room, and these are the old safes. There’s not much in them now.”

"You ought to have a ghost to complete the interest of the place."

"So there was a ghost, your honour," put in the servant-woman. "Lord Claude used to walk them passages regular, till Father Cleary—God rest his soul!—laid him; and that I seen him do with my own two eyes—said Mass on that very dresser."

"On that dresser!" cried the Englishman, astonished, looking at the piece of furniture in question, laden with willow-pattern plates, pitchers, and tea-pots.

"On that very dresser, sir," she repeated emphatically. "And Misther Devereux paid tin pounds for that Mass. 'Twas rael hard to lay him, 'count of him bein' a——"

"Come along and see the house," broke in her master, impetuously cutting short the speech, which he feared would offend

the stranger. "Biddy, did you give the pigs their dinner yet?"

There was a tone of rebuke in his words that Biddy evidently felt, for she left the corner where she was knitting, and muttered some unintelligible answer, as she moved the great three-legged pot in the chimney.

Miss Helena led the way into a passage, followed by Devereux and her brother. Satterthwaite lingered behind, and put half a crown into Biddy's hand.

"Long life to your honour, anyhow!" said she effusively. "And sure I hope I may meet you in heaven."

There was an accent of doubt, yet condescending goodwill, in the "I hope" that almost upset the donor's gravity. Biddy seemed a thorough fool, of the pious, good-natured sort; her manner was perfectly respectful, however, as that of the

most uncompromising Roman Catholic somehow always is to the liberal, well-dressed heretic. Satterthwaite laughed as he followed the party through the lower hall into the main building.

The old house was in a fearful state of wreck. The flooring had been for the most part torn up; the staircase was in ruin, and the explorers had to jump over yawning holes in the lobbies. The dining-room was the best preserved; a handsome oak ceiling and panelling still remained, and the chimney-piece was a fine specimen of carved black oak. There had been a conservatory once, leading off a pretty room on the first landing, but it was a mere skeleton now, and a tank in the centre, that no doubt had once held aquatic plants, was filled with rubbish. It was melancholy to see the decay and neglect of everything. A dead vine hung still on

the walls, and a monthly rose had climbed in a deserted casement, and shed its soft pink leaflets on the floor. The swallows had built their nests in the corners of the rooms, where they remained from last year ; and the wind which swept through the deserted passages caught up and made little whirlwinds of the dust.

The Ferrards strolled about, looking at the ruin of what was their ancestral home with a sort of listless interest. Isi jerked bits of wood at the nests, and his sister plucked the monthly roses from their stem and fastened them in her dress.

“Let me help you,” said Satterthwaite, taking out his penknife, for he saw she was scratching her fingers. He approached and stretched out his hand to take the branch.

“Never mind,” she said brusquely ; and

she snapped off the roses so roughly that a shower of pink petals fell on the floor.

“What a lovely view!” said he, quietly replacing his knife, and affecting not to see the results of her self-will. “We have a view of the mountains at this side.”

“Yes, I know—the Galtees.”

Satterthwaite leaned out of the empty window—the sashes had long ago fallen out—and admired the wide stretch of plain, divided by the Darragh, dashing tumultuously between its rocky banks.

“Is that wall, far over, the boundary between this and Comerford?”

“Yes. It’s the boundary now, but it was the deer park; all Comerford, you know, belonged to Darraghmore once—yes, beyond the village. Cawth told me, —where’s the use of talking of it now!” And a flush mounted to her cheek as she

turned away and stooped over the bunch of roses in her hand.

The spring sun shone in, lighting up her hair and gleaming in her eyes, and a faint pink shade from the flowers threw its reflection on her pale face. Satterthwaite thought he never saw any one more beautiful or interesting—almost pathetically so—at that moment. Then Devereux and Isidor came back; they had been to the upper rooms.

“It’s here you are! I thought you had gone down, Mr. Satterthwaite. Hel! are we going to look for the rabbits to-day? you never fetched the dog as I bid you.”

“No! Char has him down the river. Davy and he went out after breakfast.”

“Fetch him on Friday then, mind.”

“Do you hunt rabbits with a ferret?” said Satterthwaite to Devereux. “I shall have some ferrets at Rosslyne by the end

of the week. The place is full of rabbits, and if you would care to have them, you can."

Then they all went down the stairs again, and returned to the farm kitchen. Satterthwaite looked at his watch. It was nearly five, then turned to Helena and said :

"I am going back to Darraghstown, Miss Ferrard ; will you allow me to offer you a seat in my car ? You had better," he continued, turning to Isi, "let me drive you and your sister home—we shall have rain immediately."

The boy made no answer, but looked at her. Helena seemed undecided what to do.

"Thank you," said she hesitatingly ; "we walked out—I think we can—we had better go back the same way—unless for a part of the road—"

Satterthwaite went on—he saw her ob-

jection : " It's a long way, you know, if it rains—six miles. I'll drop you on the bridge if you like."

They took their seats. She and her brother on one side, and Satterthwaite on the other.

" Good-bye," said Devereux. " I'll be glad enough of the ferrets, my own are dead ; and if you come over some day we'll show you how we do them. Hel, remember now—"

There was something in the tone in which this was pronounced that made Satterthwaite prick his ears and glance sharply at the other side of the car. They drove off through the demesne, the car jolting over the rough ground till the rickety springs creaked again. The high-road was reached at last, and then their progress was smooth enough. The Ferrards were silent and moody, Satterthwaite

thought. Isidor leaned back, his chin sunk on his breast, and Helena seemed anxiously looking out for some one.

"Do you care for driving, Miss Ferrard?"

"No! not so much as riding, and I seldom get any of that, unless Jim lets me on the colt. I used to ride, in Galway."

"I wonder," thought Satterthwaite, "would she ride my black if I had him here? We'll see about this when I get over the horses;" then, obeying a sudden impulse, he said to her:

"I shall have my horses very soon; there is one that would carry you nicely. Should you care to ride him sometimes?"

She turned and looked at him with eyes wide open, with wonder and pleased astonishment. "Oh! I should like it above all things," she cried; then a doubtful look

succeeded the bright glow, and she seemed moody and overcast again.

The grey bank of clouds into which the sunset had melted, now spread across the sky in a swift flying thick mantle. The mild air became close and oppressive, and the perfume from the hedgerows was sickly in its heavy sweetness. The distant hills seemed nearer, with that grey distinctness that always heralds rain, and the noise of the Rack at the foot of the slope sounded louder. He urged on the horse as fast as possible, dreading a downpour, for which the party were totally unprepared. Ere long they heard the dash of a horse behind them. It was the mail-car from Ballycormack, and in a very few minutes the old grey had overtaken and given them the go-by. Satterthwaite saw Thady the driver eye the off-side of his car with a stare of mingled wonder

and amusement. Then he turned to him and roared above the clatter :

“Hurry, yer honor! we’re in for it;” and as he spoke he held up his whip toward the sky.

The old horse got the whip pretty severely, and by the time they reached the bridge there was a prospect of a speedy shelter ere the rain commenced in earnest, although the big drops had been chasing them for some minutes. Helena and her brother barely waited for the car to pull up ere they jumped off. What they meant Satterthwaite could not imagine, but instead of going home, they appeared to him, as he drove on, to be climbing down the bank to get under the arches of the bridge—a damp shelter truly. He passed the post-office on his way to the inn, and observed that the knot of idlers collected there stared at him with unusual interest.

Doubtless Thady had related what he had seen—the Ferrards driving along the Ballycormack road on his car. This, taken in conjunction with the events of the previous night, seemed to them a most unaccountable proceeding. Satterthwaite chuckled to himself at their wonder.

“A little while and this will be forgotten,” thought he; “certainly, I have no intention of punishing these poor children for what is no fault of theirs. I wonder if it will be necessary for me to carry any message to this troublesome Char Ferrard, or is it better to let things alone?”

He mused for a long time over the vexed question. It was plain enough that the Ferrards considered they had a right to help themselves, and the neighbourhood in general seemed to favour the notion. As to that matter, Satterthwaite was not inclined, as may be imagined, to agree with

them. Still he pitied the boy and girl, and for their sakes wrote that evening a courteous note to Charles Ferrard, to the effect that he, John Satterthwaite, Esq., of Rosslyne, would consider himself under an obligation to Mr. Ferrard, if the latter would avail himself whenever he chose of the privilege of fishing the Rack for five miles above the weir.

To this note Satterthwaite received no reply, and as the river police were instructed that the young Ferrards were to be left to enjoy their sport unmolested, he heard no more of the nightly depredations in Comerford.

A week elapsed and found Satterthwaite still at the hotel in Darraghstown. The Dublin tradesmen seemed to have taken a fancy to their job, and loitered over the work with that ingenuity of dilatoriness

so characteristic of their class everywhere, but for which Irish workmen must be decreed the palm. As long as his eye was on them, spades or trowels, chisels or brushes were plied with an industry that exasperated Satterthwaite beyond endurance, for he knew perfectly that the moment his back was turned or his attention required elsewhere it would cease, and the fellows would laugh at him for a fool.

He had not seen the Ferrards since the afternoon on which he met them at the old house of Darraghmore ; once, indeed, when riding out in the country he had a distant glimpse of Isidor and Helena, but they jumped over a ditch as soon as they perceived his approach, and since they chose to avoid him he had no alternative but to ride on without noticing them. As soon as the gang of workmen left him free to devote a little time to other matters, he determined

to return the visits paid him by the neighbours. The Reallys, of Buona Vista, claimed his attention first; and one soft, showery April day saw him, mounted on his beautiful black horse, ascending the steep winding avenue which, branching off the Ballycormack Road, led to their residence.

An entrance gate of oak-stained wood, ornamented by well-wrought iron clasps, was opened by a boy from the lodge, and gave admission to a well-kept carriage-drive bordered with trees. Satterthwaite looked round approvingly, and Perry's description of the people of the house recurred to him. " ' Mrs. Really was brought up abroad, and has a tongue like a knife.' Humph ! whereabouts is the telescope, I wonder ? " By this time he was at the hall-door, which stood open.

There was a glass porch filled with flowers. A servant appeared at this and

led him into a low-ceilinged room, with three pointed windows commanding a full view of the town which lay at the foot of the hill, and of the river-course eastward. A fire of wood and turf was burning in the grate, and the slightly acrid smell of the peat-smoke was mingled not unpleasantly with the perfume of a box of hyacinths in the window. A garden lay behind, bare as yet, save for a few spring flowers. It was a sunny, bright aspect, and the buds on the fruit trees were forward and promising.

Satterthwaite sat down and looked about him. "What a contrast to the Perrys' rooms!" thought he. "Is it the foreign training or the Protestantism that is to account for this?" he asked himself, looking at the books and handsome, but more curious than handsome, things that were scattered about. "In Austria they are all Catholics, so it can't be the mere religion

or associations in that way." Over the piano hung an engraving of Ary Scheffer's "Dante and Beatrice." "It might have been worse," thought he, looking to another wall; there was the "Light of the World," lantern and all. He smiled, and turned away, to find himself confronted by "Dignity and Impudence" and the "Stag at Bay." "I wonder does madame read Browning. How does that first chapter of the 'Inn Album' run?"

"'On a sprig-pattern-papered wall there brays
Complaint to sky Sir Edwin's dripping stag;
His couchant coastguard creature corresponds,
They face the Huguenot and Light o' the World.'

"That's it," went on Mr. Satterthwaite, when he had finished his quotation; "here we have it all, 'salubrious acclivity' to boot; but I had not expected this. What did I think to find either? I don't know; and yet I feel aggrieved."

He had no time for further meditation,

for the door opened and the lady of the house entered. Satterthwaite looked in vain for some trait or expression of face to connect her with the gossiping description he had had from her neighbours below. A low, deep-lined forehead, close-set eyes of an indeterminate tawny hue, grey-besprinkled brown hair, and a brown but thoroughly healthy skin ; the mouth large and full of energy and will. Her manner was good, and, to Satterthwaite's surprise, that of a woman accustomed to society. They exchanged a few formalities. Her bright eyes expressed all the time, as Satterthwaite could see, curiosity as to himself and a sort of wonder. Whether this last was complimentary or not he was in doubt. She sat down in the bay window with her back to the light, and he, sitting opposite, could feel, rather than see, the half-satiric, half-expectant glance of her eyes upon him.

“Yes,” he replied to an indirect question ;
“it is not the first time I have visited Ireland.
I intend to take up my residence here now.”

“Indeed ! Permanently, may one ask ?”
There was an undercurrent of amused
laughter in the words, demurely and po-
litely as she uttered them. Then she
picked up some bit of gay-coloured wool-
work from a mother-o’-pearl case beside
her, and commenced it leisurely.

“Yes, permanently—at least, I hope so.
If I like it and find the hunting pleasant,
I may be here six or eight months of every
year.”

“And you do like it so far, do you not ?”

“Well, I have been so busy—my house
is not yet inhabitable, and I have no ex-
perience as yet of the people or the place,
so I can’t say. It’s pretty rainy, too.”

“Yes, you can see the river from that
window ; how broad and full it is !”

Satterthwaite rose and went to a side window, from which there was a magnificent view eastward, and looked out. She followed him.

"I can see the whole town ; it lies almost under our feet at this side. You would never believe we were at such a height ! Look, there are the Miss Perrys taking their usual walk."

Satterthwaite could see the four figures distinctly. They looked small, but still they were unmistakable.

"I know them," replied he ; "I was at their house one evening. What a dull life they seem to have of it ! And, by-the-bye, Mrs. Really, do you know their neighbour, Miss Ferrard ?"

"Yes, yes," she replied quickly, and looking up sharply at him, "I do know her. That's a very interesting young lady."

"Can you tell me anything of them ?"

They are a most extraordinary family. People of title, and so situated !”

“ I know her—of her, rather. When they came here first, my husband made me go down to that den of theirs to call. I shall not forget it in a hurry !” and she uttered a short amused laugh. “ A black-eyed boy opened the door, and glared at me through a chink. He did not wait to hear what I had to say, but called out, ‘ Hoy, Cawth !’ then an old woman came out—a frightful-looking crone—and clapped the door in my face, hallooing to the dogs as she did so ; and as I drove off I caught a glimpse of Miss Ferrard and the young gentleman who had opened the door to me laughing at my discomfiture from a top window. I was forgiving enough to send her a message afterwards that she would be welcome to sit in my pew in church ; but of this she took no notice.”

Satterthwaite was silent for a moment, thinking over Mrs. Really's story, and picturing to himself the scene she described—perfectly true in every particular, he had no doubt.

“You are interested in them, I see,” continued the lady, speaking rapidly. “Well, they must be new specimens for you. Don't think all the Irish aristocracy are like these creatures; though, for my part, I find these infinitely more—” she hesitated for a word, then finished, “amusing.”

“Amusing!” he repeated dubiously; “well, yes, it is amusing, I suppose. But I feel very sorry for that girl and boy, but the girl in especial. Why, she is on the road to destruction! Could nothing be done for them? It is such a pity! and she's a fine creature!”

Madam looked scrutinisingly across her

knitting at Satterthwaite, and shrugged her shoulders.

"She's a beautiful girl, but untamable—quite untamable, I assure you."

"Mrs. Perry tells me," he went on, "that sisters of Lord Darraghmore, who reside in Bath, took her in hand; but she ran off home."

Madame Really laughed aloud with a sarcastic ring in her voice. Satterthwaite almost began to dislike her. "She was bitter," he thought, "cold-hearted and inquisitive. Still, busybodies are almost always goodnatured—or, at least, officious: there is a distinction between the two, though people do not always make it. The same feeling that prompts their interest in other people's affairs moves them frequently to action in their behalf. Between speech and action there is not always the gulf people imagine." And he wondered

madam did not show more kindly feeling to Helena Ferrard.

“Mrs. FitzFfoulkes also went to see them several times. She got in once, and the old man behaved rather nicely. She asked the girl to come to the glebe-house and take lessons from their governess; and she promised to get her a situation as companion or governess in England later. The old man seemed inclined to have the offer accepted; but not a word could Miss Hel be got to say in the matter, and Mrs. FitzFfoulkes was never allowed in again—in fact, the next time she went there, one of the boys threatened to take her life for insulting his sister. She was not gifted with tact, poor lady, and I dare say spoke a little too plainly.”

“I daresay,” observed Satterthwaite dryly. He felt angry and amused, too, at the idea of the rector’s wife patronising

and no doubt lecturing Miss Helena. It was a wonder she ever left the house with whole bones !

Then the door opened, and madam's husband, the ex-butter merchant, came in. He, too, was unlike the idea Perry's malevolent tongue had given Satterthwaite. About sixty years of age, with a weak submissive expression of face, and not too much brains, he yet was not altogether commonplace or unintelligent. They shook hands heartily and sat down. He spoke with a thick indistinct pronunciation, vastly different from his wife's clear-cut accent. For a few minutes the conversation consisted of repetitions of what had gone before. Satterthwaite explained his motives, if he had any, in coming to Darraghstown, with whose undesirability as a place of residence they seemed both equally impressed, reminding

him unpleasantly of the Perrys in that respect.

“ You intend to break up the meadows at Rosslyne, I’m told,” Really began, clasping a pair of large hard hands on his knees as he spoke.

“ Yes ; I intend to try farming. I have a fine farm in Bucks. Do you also disapprove of that plan ?”

Really shook his head. “ If you look sharp after your men you may do well. But I warn you the difficulty of getting labourers is tremendous. They won’t do half the day’s work your Englishmen will ; and they want as high wages—and higher. An honest day’s work is not to be had out of them. You can’t take your eyes off them from beginning to end of the week.” There was no doubting the sincerity of this—Really spoke with real feeling.

“ It’s the same with Irish servants every-

where. Any other kind think they are in some way bound to give value for their pay," Mrs. Really's sharp voice came in with an odd contrast. "They think work of any sort a disgrace. Positively I sometimes believe the Garden of Eden was situated in this country; nowhere else are they so faithful to the tradition that 'Labour is a curse—a disgrace.' Poverty is nothing so long as they can get on without *doing* anything. Their ideal is, as one of my servants expressed it, 'to live up in state—with her own pig, in her own cabin.' Think of it!" and Madam Really laughed heartily.

"Ah!" said her husband, "but do you remember that story of Teague Brian?"

"Oh yes, that was even better, more characteristic. We had a sort of job-worker to whitewash here recently, and he contrived to dirty the floor of a room so

as to excite the wrath of our cook. She told him he should have brought his wife with him to scrub the floor and put things to rights. 'My wife!' cried Teague indignantly, 'I'd have you to know my wife never went down on her knees in her life, barring it was to say her prayers, and I'm not the man that would make her. She never did such a thing as scrub since she was born.'"

"Biddy never got over that setting down," said Really, laughing loudly; "her pride was terribly wounded."

"I have brought my own servants with me," said Satterthwaite. "Can't bear strangers about me."

Just then a servant announced lunch, and they went into another room—a pretty bay-windowed chamber with a lovely view of the river and Comerford wood.

"You have even a better aspect here

than I have at Rosslyne," said Satterthwaite, standing at the window; "one could never get tired of that view."

"I do get tired of it though," said madam, who was carving a cold fowl with dexterity. "We don't spend more than half the year here usually; indeed, once May is out, I like to get off. I always like to be in London in June. I like the crowd and noise after this hermitage—the strange faces are a variety."

"I am sick of London; the people here are infinitely more interesting to me. They are not as witty as I expected, though."

"Come and take something to eat," said madam, indicating a chair at her right hand.

He sat down, inwardly comparing her handsomely, even tastefully equipped table with the hideous squalor of the Perrys. A painted china pot in the centre held hyacinths, and slender specimen glasses

were filled with spring flowers. Pretty china and glass, and well prepared though simple food, gave evidence that madam's foreign up-bringing had not been lost upon her.

"Not as witty as you expected, Mr. Satterthwaite?—what right had you to expect anything of the kind? You English always fancy that you can buy Irish wit as you buy Irish poplins or whiskey. It is not so at all, and perhaps it is as well that the wretches have something left that they cannot sell. I don't know why it is you always expect fun and drollery from an Irishman, and moreover you are angry when you don't get it."

"I do plead guilty to being disappointed in my Jehu."

"There it is—you were disappointed," she spoke petulantly; "now, what right had you to expect to get wit over and

above the mileage, in return for your shillings and sixpences? Money never yet bought wit. The historical Irishman has a great deal to answer for."

"What do you mean by the historical Irishman?"

"The Irishman that all you English have in their mind's eye! A wonderful impossible animal, extinct, thank heaven, as the dodo, barefooted and ragged, witty as Voltaire and philosophic as Plato, and ready for a consideration to shower his epigrams and reflections on your eager ears. I don't know who is responsible for it, the stage Irishman or the literary Irishman, but somebody is."

"First impressions are always lasting, Mrs. Really, but I allow they may be erroneous."

"True, true. Now I have a theory anent first impressions, and indeed I firmly

believe in it. I do think that the cause of the decadence of the stage in these days is due to that pernicious and abominable system of taking young children to see pantomimes. At that stage of life—first impressions are really lasting—and you give children ideas of monsters and monstrosities of all sorts in connection with the theatre that they never wholly lose in after life. They cannot disconnect their early ideas of something awful and impossible from the stage ; instead of pictures of life they want images in the concrete of their nightmares ; anything realistic is distasteful to them. I do wish that a theatrical pre-Raphaelitism might arise and sweep burlesque and extravagance off the face of the earth. They are the illegitimate offspring of pantomime—nothing else.”

“ I allow it would be a good ride—dance——”

“Riddance! when we were in London last spring we went to the theatres—I always do—and to see them presenting those odious old heathen gods and goddesses as if human nature had gone out of fashion and we had got to be transcendental to that degree that the mere sight of our flesh and blood was distasteful to us under any circumstances—pah!”

“I could very well imagine your disgust, Mrs. Really; you are interested in human nature and you study it, whereas I don’t study it or care about it one straw. No, I’m tired of that sort of thing.”

She looked at him with a curious undecipherable expression in her dark eyes, and said in a queer constrained voice,

“I fear you are *blasé*, Mr. Satterthwaite.”

“*Blasé*—I don’t think I am, but I

confess to being disillusioned. No more hock—what capital hock it is !”

“ Yes, I never take anything else. My husband, as you see, won’t follow my example.”

The worthy Really, who was stolidly eating his luncheon, an occasional nod alone showing that he was attending to them, looked up.

“ I don’t know how anybody can drink those thin sour stuffs, they don’t suit this climate at all. I would rather have Beamish and Crawford than a tun of that Hildesheimer. You should always drink the wines of the country, and that’s what I do.”

Satterthwaite rose to go. Madam Really accompanied him to the hall, and taking a garden-hat from a peg walked down to the lodge-gate beside him. He dismissed the boy and led his horse.

“What a pretty creature that is,” said she, admiring the glossy coat of his favourite. “You English do get the best of everything in this world.”

“An Irish horse, eh, Mr. Satterthwaite?” asked Really with a laugh; “you’ll allow us that one merit now?”

He was standing in the porch looking after them.

“Go in, Really—your rheumatism, you know,” said madam sharply.

He disappeared with an obedience that made Satterthwaite smile. They passed under two fine lime-trees; the bud-sheaths were swelling fast, and a sweet growing smell was exhaled from everything.

“My favourites are getting on—my lindens,” said Madam Really, glancing upward with eyes that looked the brighter under the shade of the old hat.

“Lindens!” repeated Satterthwaite; “do you know Unter den Linden?”

“Yes!” she answered with a shrug, and a quick sharp look. “I know Berlin well.”

They were at the lodge-gate now; the boy held back the gate, and they passed out. Satterthwaite pulled up Auster to take his leave of her. She stood a moment.

“I am going up the road a bit. Yes; don’t be alarmed at my costume. Living in the backwoods has one recompense—you can dress how you like. I hope to see you again soon, and we’ll have a chat over affairs in general, and these interesting Ferrards in particular, eh?”

The “eh” was “as sharp as a knife,” and so was the glance the lady shot at him. He could not answer for a moment. She went on :

"I am interested in the Ferrards, Mr. Satterthwaite—greatly interested. They are characters. I've met some of the family before. Strange as it may sound to you, *Ober-Hauptmann* Claud von Ferrard was a—an acquaintance of mine in Vienna twenty or twenty-five years ago; so in fact I am a *friend* of theirs on that account."

"A friend of theirs!" repeated he, emphasizing the words and looking at her in astonishment—at her speech, which seemed pregnant with a meaning far fuller than the mere words conveyed, and at her own looks, which were in truth odd enough. "Twenty or twenty-five years ago, Claud Ferrard was an acquaintance of mine in Vienna!" The words seemed to ring again in his ears.

Mrs. Really was looking up at him—for Satterthwaite had mounted his horse—and

her lean brown face had a red glow in it; the dark, orange-flecked eyes seemed larger and more brilliant beneath the overhanging brim of the garden-hat. Her plain black dress was kilted up for a tramp through the mud—for it had been raining all the morning, and the roads were 'soft—and she was pulling on a pair of wash-leather gloves, which in point of size and fit were to ordinary gloves what easy slippers are to dress-boots.

"Well, well," thought Satterthwaite, "who knows what dead and buried romance we have disturbed the ashes of now! Perhaps she only distrusts me. Does she mean this as a warning or a defiance? I can't make her out!"

"Yes," she answered, "I am interested in them too. Let me see you soon again, Mr. Satterthwaite; *auf Wiedersehen!*" and off she started.

“ Yes, certainly. Good-bye, then, for to-day !” And black Auster set out at a smart trot.

His master turned him at the first cross-road he met, and rode out into the country, not much caring where he went ; for his only object was a ride, and all roads were alike, flowing with water and slush.

It was between four and five in the afternoon, a yellow, watery sun was shining in the west, and the rain-clouds of the forenoon were piled in a black lowering mass, with huge woolpack borders that looked like snow-clad mountain-tops. The trees, wet and dripping, and with their resinous thick buds almost bursting, were gilded by the far-reaching, trembling fingers of the fast-declining sun. Over the bog, eastwards, hung a veil of creeping, shifting mist-wreaths, and the red pools were black and silver alternately as the shadows came

and went. From the woods of Comerford the birds' voices rose in a jubilant, tuneful chorus; thrushes leading, and their yellow-beaked rivals, less musical, but louder, almost drowning them sometimes. The woodquests flapped heavily across the open spaces between the trees, the slate-coloured bodies showing clearly against the black tracery of the boughs; and a solitary magpie, birdsnesting, uttered its hoarse, vindictive screech, as it sailed clumsily overhead.

Every moment the landscape changed; new lights, new shadows fell across it. The Galtees, purple and sullen-looking, stretched like a rampart across the north. Suddenly a breeze sprang up, the clouds stirred and parted, and there they lay, bathed in gold. Then it was the Rack, winding like a broad leaden girdle round the woods; in a moment it was a running

live stream of molten-silver, which gave back the blue overhead and the flying marestails, queerly mixed with pale-green alder branches, grey willow catkins, and here and there the scarlet-tipped head of a water-fowl.

Auster's legs were grey, not black, so splashed and draggled was he; and his rider, who seemed deepplunged in a brown study, roused himself to turn the animal's head homewards, when he caught sight of a horseman approaching at a walk far down the road. At first he thought it was Perry, and he allowed his horse to walk on slowly to meet him. But when he approached a little nearer, he saw it was not the lawyer, but the dispensary doctor, Cartan, returning from a visit. Satterthwaite, thinking it would be hardly civil to ride off as soon as he discovered his mistake, drew his bridle and stood till he came up.

"Good-day, Doctor Cartan ; I took you for our friend Perry in the distance."

"Perry never rides ; he hasn't a horse equal to his weight. How are you, sir ? I've been out on one of those cock-robin excursions of mine ten miles away. Lord help me !"

"On a what ?" said Satterthwaite, turning his horse.

"Augh ! You don't know. Faith, then, you're to be envied ! A red ticket call."

"Ah, indeed ! Red tickets ; that means no fee, eh ?"

"That means no pay, and no thanks either. Ah ! Mr. Satterthwaite, these are barbarians of people. I am going five miles round the other side of Tobergeen now to see a rich farmer's wife for the seventh time without a fee. They would do anything with money before they'd give

it to a doctor ; and she is seriously ill too. That's seventy miles without getting one penny. I'll send them a bill ; but goodness knows if they'll ever give me half my money."

"What does that mean ? Why don't you insist on your rightful due ?"

"Where would be the use of that ?" replied he disconsolately. "Doyle is one of the poor-law guardians, and would only do me some mischief. Ah ! you see, sir, they're so ignorant here. This very woman let one of her sons die of fever just out of pure neglect. 'They'll die or they'll get well, according to God's will,' and what is the use of the doctor ? In fact, the general rule is to send for the priest when they see some extraordinary change in the sick person, and he usually orders the doctor ; but, indeed, in too many cases, I'm no use. And look what they'll spend then at the

funeral. That poor boy of Doyle's cost forty pounds to bury him."

"How did he cost that sum?" asked the listener, in wonder.

"Oh! whiskey chiefly. There was a rich farmer in Limerick when I was doing duty there last summer for a friend of mine, and his father-in-law was taken suddenly ill—stroke after stroke of apoplexy. Well, I told him the old man might hold out three days. 'Three days,' said he; 'that will just give time to get the whiskey down from Dublin!' And he wrote off to Dublin for a hogshead on the spot. After all, he had to telegraph to them not to send it; for his father-in-law died that night, so of course they could not wait, and they had to get it at the nearest town."

"Is this practice general, Doctor Cartan?" asked Satterthwaite, after a shout of

laughter at the matter-of-fact way in which the doctor related this story.

“Ay, it’s the rule; but, indeed, the priests are doing their best to keep it down. Sixty gallons were used at the ‘giving out’ of the last funeral in Ballycormack. Ay,” he went on bitterly, “and a trifle of that cost might have saved the man’s life. It is no use trying to get on with such savages; and then, if they take it into their numbskulls that my treatment doesn’t suit them, off they march to Bruton or Mac-Sheehan, and bring them in over my head.”

“That is too bad, indeed! Dr. Cartan, I really feel for you.” Satterthwaite had great difficulty in suppressing a smile.

“I’ll cut it,” Cartan continued, in a savage tone. “I’ll do anything rather than be lost here. They’re nothing but barbarians and heathens—nothing. What sort of a place is it for a man to be losing

the best of his days in ? There's no society—nothing worth staying in it for. There's nothing doing but drinking !”

“ Humph ! the worst occupation a man could have.”

“ Well !”—this a shamefaced tone !—
“ what else is there ? Do you ever ride out this road ; it's the best of the lot, the Dublin Road. I have to go off to this precious Madam Doyle's. I've a mind to put her to the expense of her own funeral. She gave her daughter eight hundred pounds fortune last year ; and to hear her you wouldn't believe she could afford herself as much as one pill.”

Satterthwaite was laughing so that he could hardly speak.

“ Is it that she doesn't believe in doctors or medicine ?”

“ I don't know if it's that,” replied Doctor Cartan morosely. “ All I know is she

don't believe in paying me. It all goes by the will of God with them. They'll recover or they'll die according to that, without physic or physicians."

"Why, it's pure fatalism. It reminds me of the Peculiar People."

"Peculiar—oh, faith, I believe ye," replied the dispensary doctor. "They're only too damned peculiar—so they are."

Then he gave his old, worn-out nag a vicious blow of the whip, and set off, trotting heavily through the mud and water of the Dublin Road. Notwithstanding her unpleasant eccentricities, Satterthwaite felt almost sorry for Mrs. Doyle.



CHAPTER III.

“ Car les histoires que i'emprunte ie les renvoye sur la conscience de ceulx de qui ie les prens. Les discours sont à moy, et se tiennent par la preuve de la raison, non de l'experience ; chascun y peult joindre ses exemples ; et qui n'en a point, qu'il ne laisse pas de croire qu'il en est assez, veu le nombre et variété des accidents. Aussi en l'estude que ie traite de nos moeurs et mouvements, les témoignages fabuleux, pourvu qu'ils soyent possibles, y servent comme les vrais ; advenu ou non advenu. Il y a des auteurs desquels le fin, c'est dire les évènements ; la mienne, si j'y savois arriver, seroit dire ce qui peult advenir.”

MONTAIGNE.



ABOUT a week after Satterthwaite's visit to Madam Really, he was able to install himself in his new house. The last of

the indoor workmen had been sent about his business, and two rooms were finished and inhabitable — the large sitting-room that overlooked the garden slope at the west side of the house, and which its owner elected to use as a library, and his own bedroom. The furniture was arriving every day in cases from Bristol and Dublin, and Satterthwaite had unceasing trouble about missing parcels. He started one fine day to walk into Darraghstown to inquire at the post-office about a case of books which had gone astray, and, after a long and rather agreeable walk, found himself opposite Madam Really's gate entrance just as that lady was driving out in her basket-phaeton.

"Mr. Satterthwaite!" she cried in a pleased voice, "is that you? I have not seen you about for an age. You have left the hotel?"

She had pulled up the pony, and seemed inclined for a chat. He, not unwilling to humour her, stopped too.

“Yes ; I am at home now—established in Rosslyne. I was going to the post-office to send a message by the mail-car to the station-master. One of my never-ending consignments has gone astray.”

“I am going over to the station. Get in and I’ll drive you across. They never do anything right at that post-office.”

As she spoke she stooped sideways and unbuttoned the apron of the phaeton. She had on yellow gauntleted driving-gloves, and her old hat was tied securely under her chin. Satterthwaite could hardly resist a smile ; however, he jumped in and took the vacant seat at her left hand.

“Drive, eh ? No, no, I won’t let you

drive. Max understands me, and then I can talk to you at the same time. How are you getting on?"

"I am pretty well shaken down by this. It seems lonely up there, strange as that may sound, after the town."

"After the brilliancy and dissipation of Darraghstown, eh?" Mrs. Really laughed at him. "I hear wonderful tales of your house - furnishing. By-the-bye, has the parish priest called on you yet? He has come home."

"No. What sort of man is he? Can this be true, what Perry says, that his new chapel cost eleven thousand pounds?"

"Every penny," replied she; "and it is not completed yet. One of half that size and cost would have done very well."

"It is my opinion they wanted a school far more."

"Quite true," she replied, "if they'd only think so. They have the National School in a nice condition. The sister of the priest's servant is mistress of it."

"What about that, if she is qualified?"

"Yes, of course; but she is not—nothing of the sort. The boys' school is not quite so bad. An intermediate school is what is wanted. These people," she went on, pointing to the shops they were passing, "are able to afford a better class of instruction for their children, and it is a pity they should be obliged to send their children to the same school with those of mere labourers and paupers. The National system is utterly rotten and useless."

"The principle of it is sound, though; and as regards the mixture of different classes, I confess I do not see the evil of that. In my mind, it tends to soften the

inequalities of rank, and begets a kinder fellow-feeling. I know in the village schools in Scotland the minister's sons often sit on the same bench with the barefooted village children."

"Ah, yes; but the minister's sons are learning classics, and fitting themselves for a university career at the very school where the poor children learn the three R's; that's just the difference, and that's what we want here. These children, poor or not, are all condemned to the same wretched starved mental food; and as for the soundness of the National-school system, it has been shelved long ago, principle and all. The Government would do infinitely better to allow denominational schools at once. It would be more honest, more dignified, than this trimming. It is all a job, neither one thing nor another. Then this mixing classes together has a really bad effect—I

mean intellectually and socially. This is not a republican country, and these little shopkeepers are a degree above the mere peasantry, so are the small farmers above their working-men, but their children are all reduced to the same level; the consequences are plain to see. They go hand-in-hand in all their wild political schemes. They are all equally foolhardy, because equally ignorant."

"I dare say you are right. That system of education must have a levelling-down effect."

"It has; but to my mind that is not the worst evil. Look at all the talent that is lost and wasted; it is positively incalculable. There is ——, the painter; he is abroad, and is very young, so perhaps you have never heard of him. An idle, bright little imp he used to be; one day in the Christian Brothers' school, he was found

caricaturing the teacher in his copy-book. This sketch was shown to the chief of the institution; he recognised the talent in it, and marched —— by the ear, and sorely against his will, into the drawing-class. The very first thing he ever tried to sell was appraised at fifty guineas !”

“ I used to think that the reason that the Irish are so far behind us in art and literature was, that all their intellectual energy ran to politics. The English think so, anyhow.”

“ They are wrong—utterly wrong. If the Irish get anything of a fair chance as regards education, they would soon be—equal to the Scotch, at any rate, and that is saying a good deal. Look at Foley, the sculptor; he belonged to this county, and I could name a dozen more to you. In Carmody’s little crockery-shop we passed a few minutes ago, is a girl of twenty who

has a better and more thorough acquaintance with English literature than many a professor. It's a fact, I think she has Shakspeare at her fingers' ends, and every one of the dramatists since."

"Nonsense! where does she get the books?"

"Buys all that can be had cheap; and she has brothers and cousins in the Queen's University in Cork—these colleges, by-the-way, are doing a great deal of good—and gets from the library there all that she requires. I can tell you that she is not the only girl here that reads. You must not take those Perry wretches as typical of Irish women. There is a dress-maker who sits up all night reading Carlyle and other books. I believe, indeed, she borrows them from Mary Carmody. They both know history thoroughly."

"Especially the controversial points, I

dare say," said Satterthwaite, beginning to laugh. "I have no doubt that the fact of this reading being prohibited is its special charm in their eyes."

"If that were true, Mr. Satterthwaite, they would hardly be such remarkable exceptions to the rest. As it is, they have, through their college friends, unusual facilities for procuring books, and they are able to appreciate them; what I contend for is, that those facilities should be open to all. As it is, I dare say they will get more harm than good from it."

"If things were otherwise, of course they would find a use and place for themselves in the world. Why could they not be teachers?"

"The teachers are paid too badly, and it is not a respectable position; in consequence, it is only some one who can do nothing else that would take an ordinary

village school like this. Certainly the dress-maker would be a better schoolmistress than Miss Magrath, who does not know how to spell. Father Quaide is the patron, and he appointed the chapel clerk to the boys' school and Miss Magrath to the girls'. He rules education and society in Darraghstown as well as elsewhere."

"But the inspector?"

"The inspector is a good Roman Catholic, and he dines with Father Quaide every time he comes here. The whole thing is this, Mr. Satterthwaite: from the first, the priests disapproved of this system, and though they have practical control over it almost all over the country, and have made it quasi-denominational, they will not rest until it is fully so."

"And fully so it never will be; the Government will never suffer it. What the priests want is to get the money into their

hands. The idea of handing over the country to ultramontaniam and rebellion !”

“There you go,” said she tartly. “The old stock boggy—brass money, wooden shoes, and popery. I did think you had more sense. What do these people know or care about the Pope? just as little as for the Queen; indeed, for that matter they know and see as much of him. The Government has no right to prescribe their education and religion for them, or, since they must have religious education, what complexion it is to take. You allow Scotland liberty in the matter, why not Ireland too? Extend the Act of 1870 to this country; let them have school boards, only provided that they have powers to create secondary as well as primary schools, connected with either of the universities, and you will soon see the end of this whole agitation.”

“You think that would settle the matter, eh? But you know the school boards would be under the thumb of the priest all the same.”

“There—begging the question again! If they like to have his thumb upon them, what is it to anybody but themselves? I do wish, Mr. Satterthwaite, you would let me give you Dr. Johnson’s immortal advice, ‘Endeavour to clear your mind of cant.’ The cant of the anti-Catholic school is simply detestable to me. And I am astonished that a man like you should condescend to *repeat* it; I say repeat, because you will allow you were only speaking on the subject at second-hand.”

“I have seen something of religious education abroad; but, as you say, Mrs. Really, I have not studied the question here; and,” added Satterthwaite in a meek tone, “I will take your advice, and

endeavour to get rid of my prejudices. But I don't in the least understand how that act could be applied here. The Government has provided a good and expensive apparatus ; is it bound to do more ?”

“The apparatus is not good, and I thought I had shown you that ; expensive it certainly is, and as useless as expensive. I as a Protestant am not arguing in favour of Papal endowment, you may be sure, but I have had a good long experience of other countries, as well as this one ; and I think the Government, be it Whig or Tory, is in a false and very dubious position when it takes on itself the paternal duty of forcing a nation to accept an uncongenial and lopsided system of this sort. Then, if it is to remain unchanged, let the Government be true to its own principles, and compel them to accept it. Its laws are evaded and laughed at. The Christian Brothers’

schools flourish at its expense ; it is by the way a secular system, yet the priests are given the control and patronage of the schools."

"Froude was right," said Satterthwaite ; "the failure here is due altogether to the half-hearted ways of the Government ; they make laws and regulations, and wink at those who break through and nullify them."

"I would approve of school boards on this principle," said Mrs. Really, "that, like the ballot, the very process of election would be a sort of education for these people. Each voter would have a personal interest and responsibility in the matter. They want something of that sort."

"How about the funds ? They are too poor to keep up a school board in this district. Could they afford it ?"

"If they were, the Purgatory rent would be

a little diminished, perhaps. Look at Mrs. Dwyer's funeral ; the priests got forty-five pounds for burying a good worthy woman. If it costs all that to get her into heaven, how will it fare with the poorer sinners hereabouts ? The Harringtons' case was the same. When old Harrington died, the son went to see the priest, and told him he had a strong aversion to the burial offerings, as they were usually carried out, and asked the priest to forego the usual collection at the house, and name a sum equivalent, which he undertook to pay. The priest refused, and the collection was made in this wise. The coffin was carried on men's shoulders out of the house to the nearest cross roads, and then laid on the ground ; the priest stood at the head, and the principal parishioners were grouped round, so as to leave a narrow passage between them and the coffin ; up this nar-

row passage the whole assembly were made to pass, and each person deposited his offering on the coffin lid, whence the parish priest removed it. When the last penny had been bestowed, the priest pocketed the sum total, and the funeral cortège was allowed to advance."

"Why, Mrs. Really, they are worse here than in Naples or Madrid! What sinful imposition!"

"Perhaps so, Mr. Satterthwaite, but I like it; I assure you I can't help almost loving these wretches for that very thing. What would five or ten shillings or a pound be to you—to me perhaps? But remember when these poverty-stricken wretches give that much money, what real hardships and privation it means. The rent is behindhand—the pig has to be sold, the new coat or new cloak has to be done without; often—very often—still greater self-

denial is practised. I declare sometimes I think I would rather see them as they are than that they should become the calculating selfish egotists that a wider culture might make them."

"I must say I find you a little inconsistent."

"Well, Mr. Satterthwaite, it's the six-guinea sherry and the eighty-guinea horses, and moreover the nephews and cousins sent to Queen's University and Trinity College on the proceeds of the Purgatory rent that make me sometimes inconsistent."

"Oh dear, and do the priests send their own relations to Trinity and to the godless colleges?"

"They do, and they preach against them all the time. Quite recently the bishop declared in his pastoral that those who did not believe in denominational educa-

tion were practically the same as those who denied the seven sacraments ; and moreover they'll pass over the men they have educated themselves and give appointments in their own Catholic University to men educated in the godless colleges."

"Indeed, Mrs. Really, I am quite glad to see that they are so liberal-minded."

"Yes, indeed I am too ; it makes me very hopeful for the future of that church here. I wish their example might be followed all round though ; in short, if they would preach what they practise."

"Do you believe the people really want the priests to have control of education ?"

"I do not believe it. The collections for that Catholic University are getting smaller every year, and that is a pretty safe test. Besides it is a useless institution. What is wanted is a thorough reconstruction of the National system ; it has been

juggled and perverted out of all shape or meaning. I really believe that school boards would be a good innovation ; the Government have had their trial, and now I would give the people a turn. Nothing could be worse than the way things are."

"If there is such a want of secondary education, why do they not found and support a private school?"

"Who could you have for teacher? The priest would never allow a Protestant to teach Latin and mathematics ; besides the Diocesan colleges must be supported, thorough humbugs as they are too. The boys come out more ignorant than they go in."

"It seems a hopeless case, but I have not a doubt that it must be confronted sometime, for the ignorance of these people is a perpetual danger."

"School boards, properly certificated

teachers, and compulsion—they'll thank you for it in the long-run. And of this I am certain now, if the school system were placed in the people's hands to-morrow, you would not see the priests at the head of it; and if they were, what harm? They could even succeed if they would modify the present system, create intermediary schools with bursaries attached, and so connect the whole system with the universities. Open a career for the clever boys whom these Diocesan colleges are turning out head centres and ignorant agitators. Open the door and see if they won't come in."

"And the priests will forbid them, and you will have the intermediate schools stand empty, as the Cork training school is empty."

"Tut-tut! that's because the priests won't give appointments to teachers trained there. This will be quite another affair. There's

Jim Devereux ; that fellow had brains, and his father had means enough to give him a profession ; but of course Father Quaide forbade college training and selected a Diocesan college, where Jim wasted time and money for no better an education than the National School below could have given him. If there were intermediate schools you would create and consolidate a bourgeois class educated in fair ratio to their wealth. That is what is wanted here. Jim in point of education has very little the advantage of one of his own cow-herds. How can the country improve when that is the case ? It is improving as to wealth if you will, but the people are fearfully illiterate. I know farmers worth from two to twenty thousand pounds, and you would not find a book in their houses ; they never read—never. There is as much evidence of culture in a cabin.”

Just now a trot was heard behind. Mrs. Really turned her head, and saw the young farmer riding his fine colt. He passed the pony phaeton directly, taking off his hat in return to their salutation.

“What a handsome young fellow!” said Satterthwaite; “I never saw a finer face. He has a very winning manner too.”

“What a dragoon he would make!” said Mrs. Really, looking admiringly at the tall straight figure of the rider as he disappeared in the distance. “He and his people are not on the best of terms just now,” she went on, with an odd change of tone, half confidential, half satirical. “The Sheahans of Ballybrophy Farm sent ‘a message’ at last Shrove-tide to old Devereux of Tobergeen. Their daughter Mary has twelve hundred pounds down, and that’s quite a fine fortune—rather uncommon—so her people have signified that they consider

our handsome young friend a suitable match. He, however, declined to have anything to do with it. And now Father Quaide has stepped in and seems likely to make trouble for Jim. How it will end I don't know. However, as soon as his sister's wedding comes off—and by-the-bye the Sheahans and their daughter are to be at that festival—Master Jim will have to decide the question; both families are anxious for the match."

"It's a regular *mariage de convenance*," said Satterthwaite, laughing.

"Something the same," assented Mrs. Really. "However, although money is the basis of operations, good looks are also taken into account. You would be greatly diverted if you heard the enumeration of a young woman's attractions. Beauty of some sort is indispensable; so many pounds or so many cows and pigs; after that a

good complexion, or as they call it a 'clane skin,' ranks first of all, and so on; deformity of any kind on either side is a fatal objection, so is constitutional delicacy. A tendency to consumption, or as they call it 'thisickyness,' is also a hindrance."

"A very wise and proper thing too," he said; "it is to be wished that rule obtained everywhere."

"Yes, and I think it is owing to these customs that the people are so good-looking. You never meet any of the deformities or 'objects' to be seen in villages in England. Long ago here, before the famine when there were more people, an old lady told me that for beauty of face and form the Greeks of old could not have surpassed the natives of this place. Even yet, though these very safeguards against deterioration are dying out, they are better looking than the average of poor village people."

“That is so. You see few ugly faces, But please finish about young Devereux.”

“Oh yes, This message came one Sunday after Mass. A boy trotted across the fields to Tobergeen, and made known to the old couple the feelings of Miss Sheahan’s parents. I must premise that Miss Sheahan had never yet seen her intended. The young fellow refused point-blank to hear one word of it. He refused to give a reason either for this unheard-of misconduct ; so of course the matter was allowed to drop. Old Devereux made some excuse, and the old people on both sides hope to bring it on again.”

“What has Devereux that he is considered a match ?”

“He is an only son, and will have the two farms. His parents would give him Darraghmore at once—her money would stock it ; or if he had another sister,

would 'fortune her off,' as they say, to some fellow or other."

"The Sheahans' money, then, would be used in that way?"

"If you like to call it so. In reality it is buying off her interest in the family property. These creatures, benighted as they are, have got a notion of justice, and admit that their daughters have equal claims on them with their sons."

"That is quite right—in one sense at least."

"Yes; but there is another aspect of the case. If Mary Sheahan has twelve hundred pounds, she has also a very exalted notion of that fact, and the respect and consideration due to herself therefrom. She will be quite above working when she is Mrs. Devereux. She will keep a dairy-woman and a helper, and possibly one or even two servants as well. She will never

enter her own dairy, and you can see what a deduction from the profits of the farm you must make for their wages and maintenance. I know farmers' wives hereabouts with hands whiter and softer than a countess's. All round this countryside there is only one farmer's wife who works about her own house and makes her butter for market. She is a Limerick woman, and she is greatly looked down upon by the others on account of that."

"They are very different from Scotch farmers' wives."

"They work hard, I know, and there's a vast difference between their produce and the Irish. It is the same thing all over the country. Anything for a living save—to work for it. Rich and poor have the one ambition; and as the mistress and master are, so are the servants too."

“How do the farmers procure servants ?
I thought they were very scarce.”

“So they are ; but you see, sooner than work and do without them, or with a smaller number, they take the plan of subletting cows and pasture for the season to the butter-factors. These provide servants, etc. ; so all the trouble is taken off their hands. They have a clear income, and nothing to do.”

“In short, these people who are clamouring for land so loudly are the very last who ought to be allowed to have it ! They want to get an idle, lazy living out of it. It is all nonsense ! Agriculture should not be the calling of the most idle, illiterate classes of society. It is far too important to the world. They think in this country that anybody can be a farmer—no education nor aptitude is required.”

“Not any more than to teach the

national schools," said Mrs. Really dryly. "Believe me, Mr. Satterthwaite, the beginning and the end, the cause and effect, all lie in this education of the nation. Look at Scotland, how all this senseless nonsense of separate nationality disappeared from among them. Their sensible thorough education did that."

"Well, they won't have it, and don't want it here. Nobody understands what the Irish want, and they don't themselves. Now, Mrs. Really, can you tell me why the Land Act failed?"

"Look about you," she replied with a laugh; "look at that farmhouse up there;" and she called his attention to an ugly bleak dilapidated house with tumble-down outhouses and ruinous-looking walls. "What compensation can that tenant claim for improvements when he is ejected? There are no improvements to be compen-

sated for. And when there are improvements, the landlord is never deterred from evicting by any sum of claims, because—and this is a vital point—there are always plenty anxious to offer fines three and four times as high as the out-going tenant's claims to get possession of the farm. You would laugh if you heard the sums they offer in that way. Their appetite for land is something abnormal, and must produce abnormal results."

"How do you account for that?"

"The habit of it, first of all; and because there is scarcely any other investment for their money. No business speculations to tempt them. The grocers and publicans in the town behind us all intend to invest their savings in land. For that matter, Tobergeen Farm will soon be out of lease, and the man who keeps the post-office and crockery-shop has money and means to bid

against old Devereux. Don't you mention that to anybody. My husband had it in confidence from Comerford's agent. The fellow has asked to get the preference, though the lease has two years to run. Yes, though they are great friends. If Devereux suspected that!"

"What treachery!" said Satterthwaite, disgusted.

"Yes, exactly. I should not wonder if old Devereux would shoot him. Men have been shot for less. Oh, they're a droll collection, I can tell you, here!"

"Yes, truly," replied Satterthwaite. "You seem to know them all, and all about them." He was amused at the notion of this sharp-eyed dame and her shrewd interest in all the village concerns. "One might fancy," thought he, "that she heard as well as saw through her big telescope."

“ They interest me, and I do know them. I am a regular busybody, and love my neighbours and their concerns. By-the-bye, what has become of our pretty friend, that maid of the mill, eh ?”

“ Who ? Oh, you mean Miss Ferrard.”

“ Oh, I forgot. I didn’t finish about young Devereux, that handsome young fellow that went by above there,” she went on after a slight pause. “ I fancy—it may be only fancy—that he and she are *épris* of one another.”

“ Indeed !” said Satterthwaite in an altered voice : then he was silent for a moment, as if thinking of what she had said. He was not thinking of it in reality, he was trying to account for an odd stunned feeling that had suddenly come over him. The news did not concern him in the least, so he told himself : and yet, in spite of himself, he was affected by it.

Her face as he entered the paddock that day at Darraghmore, with its frightened, wild expression, seemed again before him. Still he said quietly :

“ I am astonished. Are not you ? ”

“ I think it nothing to be astonished at, indeed there’s nothing unsuitable in it. He will be able to keep servants for her—what has she ever been accustomed to, a young gipsy ?—and then it will be promotion for her.”

“ But, after all, that a creature like her should marry a mere farmer—a rustic like Devereux. Then her rank——”

“ Rank ! ” madam laughed ; “ not at all. He is making the *mésalliance* ; and Miss Ferrard is certainly a less civilised being, although infinitely more interesting and attractive, than Miss Sheahan. She has been brought up in a convent. There is as much contrast between them as there is between

this animal," and she flicked her whip at a huge, old grey goose that barely waddled aside in time to escape from the wheels, "and one of the wild birds in the marshes beyond, Devereux is running a risk : he may find out that she is the undomestic animal I take her for. But *he* would have a good chance of taming her ; if any one could, he is the one ; as it is, he exercises a good influence over her and Isi."

"Poor things!" said Satterthwaite. "Mrs. Really, could nothing be done for them ? That girl ought not to be lost as she is."

"I cannot see that she is lost, or what you mean by saying so. She is very beautiful ; but that, Mr. Satterthwaite, is nothing so uncommon here. She is totally uneducated, so far as teaching goes, though, I believe, of late she has taken to study, and has given up rabbit-hunting and shooting. She is not specially talented in

any way—none of the Ferrards are. She has fiery passions and an indomitable will, and whoever rules her will do it through her affections only. Woe betide him if he ever forfeits them !”

“ She certainly is a wonderfully interesting creature. I can’t believe she is not to be tamed.”

“ Did you ever hear of her Bath escapade ?”

“ Well, I got an account of it from Mrs. Perry, but——”

“ I’ll tell you the story,” said Madam Really in a dry sententious tone. “ The two old ladies sent money for her outfit and passage to them. When I tell you she appeared there almost in rags, you can understand how their behests were obeyed. She remained, I think, a fortnight or so, then slipped off one morning quietly and got home here somehow or other. She

couldn't and wouldn't be civilised. It is a terrible misfortune she was not a Roman Catholic. She would have been caught up long ago into a convent and christianised. Now it is too late. Any attempt of the kind will end in disaster, mind you, to all concerned."

By this time they had got back to the avenue leading up to Buona Vista. There was a steep hill to be climbed. Satterthwaite jumped out of the phaeton and, going to the pony's head, led him along.

"Fourteen miles; that's not bad for the little fellow," said he, patting the pony's neck.

"Oh, that's nothing for Max! We often do our twenty miles together."

The appearance at her side of an old woman clad in a blue-cloth cloak, the hood of which covered her head, prevented further conversation. Mrs. Really leaned

forward to receive a whispered message.

“Yes, Susan; yes;—and wine? All right; I’ll send it down to her.”

The old woman clasped her hands together with an expression of gratitude, the fervid tones of which left little doubt of her sincerity, and passed on down the hill.

“That’s a good old soul,” said Mrs. Really, looking after her. “Do you see that blue cloak? Well, every Sunday four different women wear that cloak to Mass, going of course at different hours—four wretches poorer than herself.”

“That’s like St. Martin of Tours.”

“You have little idea how good these creatures are to each other. It is really pure communism—what one has, the rest have.”

“Ah! that is what keeps them poor. I

have not a bit of sympathy with that sort of thing."

"It keeps them poor. Yes, no doubt of it; but does it not show goodheartedness? I like it, though I see the bad side of it too; and I tell them of it; but 'Where's the good?' they always reply, till I've come to think the same for myself."

Then she turned in her gate, and Satterthwaite laughingly walked off home.

As he strode quickly along the highroad he revolved in his mind her talk about the Ferrards, "Helena," for so he always called the girl in his thoughts, and young Deve-reux. All things considered it is, no doubt, a suitable match. But there was something displeasing in it, nevertheless, to Mr. Satterthwaite. What business was it of his? he asked himself several times. At last he dismissed the subject from his thoughts and, lighting a cigar, began to walk

faster. After a time the part of the road lying abreast of Darraghmore was reached. Late as it was Satterthwaite stood a moment to look at the old place. The April sun was drooping behind the wood at Rosslyne, a red blaze marking its decline. The river foamed and sparkled below, the willows, pale grey in the dull light, waved their budding boughs, almost caressing the turbid flood as it went. He leaned on the paling that guarded the steep bank and looked across to the ruined house. It was more desolate and eerie than ever—no sign of life was about; the cows had all been driven in, and not even a dog's bark awoke the echoes. The white line of the far-off road, as it ascended a slope towards Tobergreen, was clearly visible, and Satterthwaite's keen eyes soon discerned a black speck slowly creeping down it; nearer and nearer it came, and at last he could dis-

tinctly see that it was composed of a horse and man : the rider had dismounted and was leading his animal carefully down the steep incline.

Satterthwaite threw away the cigar and, pulling his hat down tighter on his head, started for home in good earnest.

END OF VOL. II.

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